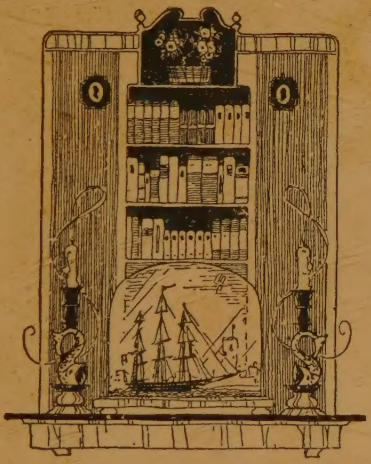
CITIES AND MEN

By

LUDWIG LEWISOHN



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Cities and Men

By

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

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To

CHARLES RECHT

Wisest of Counsellors

Best of Friends

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Culture and Barbarism:
An Irrelevant Introduction

CULTURE AND BARBARISM: AN IRRELEVANT INTRODUCTION

IT WAS, perhaps, the performance of Racine's "Phèdre" at the Théâtre Français weeks ago that started these random yet precise reflections. Against cardboard columns and a soiled blue backdrop a group of markedly fleshy ladies and gentlemen rendered with an icy and exorbitant eloquence the lines of that dramatic poem which the anonymous editor of my cheap but excellent Garnier edition declares to be "*le chef d'œuvre de l'esprit humain, et le model éternel, mais inimitable, de quiconque voudra jamais écrire en vers.*" The house was packed. This was a different world from that of the music halls where you hear nothing but the Ohio drawl or the Piccadilly diphthongs. Here were the Latins absorbed in their great tradition of discipline and order and of the transposition of experience into pure art. Transposition is a pale and feeble word. A happening among rude and remote tribes longer ago than the imagination reaches crystallized through the ages into a legend. Greek poets of a late and subtle

period used that legend in their verses. Through them it sickered down the changeful centuries to a time when even their words had become pale and hard to read with any certainty of their meaning, and drifted at last into the consciousness of the Christian Frenchman of the seventeenth century. The audience at the Français applauded that far-brought eloquence:

> Justes dieux qui voyez la douleur qui m'accable,
> Ai-je pu mettre au jour un enfant si coupable!

Somehow that scene in the theater blended in my mind with another recent scene. Cornered in a French drawing-room, a political discussion thrust much against my will upon me, I suggested in my halting French that the history of the World War was being rewritten and reinterpreted. A handsome and dignified gentleman in a frock-coat inimitably like a toga, with a red ribbon in his buttonhole, thrust his hand, Napoleon fashion, into his bosom and spoke in the rounded periods of a classical eloquence: *"N'ayez pas peur!"* How sonorous he was and how handsome and how convinced. Behind him stood the legions of Cæsar and Napoleon and the shades of Cicero and

Bossuet and the whole tradition of Church and empire and war and patriotism and glory: *"N'ayez pas peur! La France n'a pas voulu la guerre!"*

Was it vagrant fancifulness or an orderly association of ideas that again and again brought these two scenes back to me as I was reading that elderly Tory's collection of patriotic extracts which Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has chosen to call the *Oxford Book of English Prose?* Here you will find Fielding glorifying the British navy, and Christopher North on the religion of patriotism, and a thousand other variations on the same theme, and the whole culminating in an excellently written passage in which Mr. Chesterton declares that at Crécy, on the banks of the river Marne, "Christendom was delivered once more."

Perhaps it was. For profoundly, beyond all differences, Christendom meant and means one thing to La Bruyère ("Français et Chrétien") and Racine and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Santayana (who, quite rightly with his vision, is affronted by Shakespeare's morose barbarism) and to Mr. Paul Elmer More. To all of these Christendom means the great tradition of patriotism and war and victory and hierarchical, foreknown virtues and vices, and nobility

and objectivity in literature and discipline and order and conformity in life. All of them would have detested and detest the industrial revolution and the liberation of the masses and romanticism and Protestantism and the rising of the voice of the free personality. As it was from 1815 to 1848 so it is now. The old ideals of that, let us say, classical and Roman interpretation of Christendom prevail and Horthy holds rule in Hungary, Mussolini in Italy, Primo de Ribera in Spain. The world is full of loyal knights and of the virtues of knighthood; men are trying hard not to be men but obedient tribesmen and henchmen. Down with Rousseau and the Revolution! We may have objective literature again—epics and tragedies concerning "noble" persons and subjects—stupid fighters like Agamemnon, megalomaniacal vulgarians like Napoleon, enmeshed in all the tawdriest delusions: titles, fabrics, palaces, gear and pomp, of this mortal scene. All may yet be well.

Nil desperandum est Teucro duce et auspice Teucro!

* * * * *

Am I slaying the thrice slain? Am I, an American speaking to Americans, babbling of "old, unhappy, far-off things"? Hardly. I shall omit

Americanization and the public praise and private envy of Fascism by our more shabby and brutal magnates. Literature is my theme, is it not? Well, then: in the innermost core of the mind, even the American, democrat, Protestant, child of the Revolution, still holds in awe the substance of the so-called classical tradition, still dreams of the "noble objectivity" of the great race before the flood, still thinks the lyrist, the subjectivist, the autobiographer a little meaner than the epic celebrator of some savage slayer of men, still, if he be himself that personal essayist or autobiographical novelist, nurtures a secret doubt, almost a hidden shame.

The critics and reviewers, even the supposedly liberal ones, are quite open and definite in the matter. Why, they exclaim, must So-and-so always be talking about himself? Why are you always reading the history of himself and his family in the novels of a Theodore Dreiser or a Thomas Mann? Have these men no creative vision and energy? Toward the frank revealer of his experience they are even more condescending and seem always to feel a half-embarrassed patronage. Without knowing it they think all subjective literature, using that term quite broadly, a little ignoble,

a little barbarous. They are fond of talking about "egotism"; somewhere in their minds hovers the ghost of that classical tradition according to which obedience, law, order, objectivity, impersonality—let not the jester or minstrel speak except in praise of his chieftain!—are the true marks of an enduring work. They may not know it; they do not consciously know it. Within them hovers the ghost and they obey it. The classical, hieratic, Romano-Christian, the antique and broadly Latin mood still seems to them the mood of a humane culture; the modern, personal, pervasively lyrical has an inescapable touch of barbarism in their minds. They may not speak out as do Mr. Santayana and Mr. More. They are apologetic, as was the late Jules Lemaître, concerning their absorption in the romantic, the modern, and the personal. Not being Frenchmen they cannot, as he did, end in the bosom of Racine.

* * * * *

What am I after? A complete and conscious reversal of this position and the laying of a ghost that has stalked long enough. Brave men lived before Agamemnon! How true. They are plentiful in bombing squads. There was but one

Homer. Would that he had spoken out! The objective, classical tradition is the tradition of henchmen, of poets with no audience except the chieftain who threw them broken meats. Theseus was a king and the schools say that Racine was a great poet, and the obedient French audience applauds and believes that France did not will the war but is a white-souled victim of whom the American Shylock demands his pound of flesh. And can be deluded and dragged into war again. And the banners of knighthood will flutter and obedience and loyalty and the virtues of ancestors will be the watchwords of the hour. But there was also Montaigne and Voltaire and Anatole France. They will be swept out of the field of consciousness in that new *union sacrée* and men will be drunk with blood and with the mystical babbling of M. Paul Claudel. What is the "sacred union?" The elimination of protest, freedom, the free play of personality, the critical and distinguishing vision of the sum of things. It is form with a preordained substance. It is the classical; it is (in the sense of Empire, Ecclesia, war, glory, crusading) Christendom. It is the objective and the traditional. It results in the power of the state. But men rot in trenches. With Christian-

ity, with *Urchristentum*, with that essentially Jewish repudiation of force and war and property itself, with that ennobling, by virtue of their mere humanity, of slaves and outcasts, it has no relation. Where is culture? Where is barbarism? Why do the critics distrust the modern autobiographical instinct, the Judæo-Christian, Protestant, Romantic and saving speech and protest of the free man? Is the *union sacrée* nobler—the *union sacrée* of tradition and objectivity and the hush of all things but the braying of trumpets over the unspeakable shambles of some new Verdun?

* * * * *

"Look in thy heart and write." People quote Sidney and do not know how grave the admonition was. They quote Goethe's "*Gab mir ein Gott zu sagen was ich leide,*" and think it merely eloquent and moving and do not know that in those two sayings is summed up the whole matter of literature: speech of the eternal Prometheus to his fellows concerning what his pain and his rock and his vultures and his clouds and patch of stars have told him of the riddles "of man, of nature and of human life." Nor do they stop to remember that these two sayings uttered by two men of different

centuries and lands and civilizations are themselves links in the chain of a tradition older and nobler than that of objectivity and order, of rule and fixity, of generalization and decorum. Before the Greeks invented their forms, before Aristotle wrote that description of them which the children of the Latins were to misunderstand and misuse so long, the confessing individual had arisen in literature. "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees: and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy." Thus Amos, the earliest of the prophets of Israel. But did not, in more urbane terms, Socrates say precisely the same thing and assign to himself precisely the same motive? "Though I be well disposed toward you, O Athenians, and your friend, yet I shall obey the God rather than you, and as long as I breathe and am able I shall not cease searching out the truth and admonishing and persuading whomever among you I meet in my wonted way." These two had looked into their hearts; a God had given them the power to express what they had suffered. And they were impelled to share that knowledge with their fellows for the sake of light, for the sake of salvation.

There we have the autobiographic, the confessional impulse, changeless in its essential character throughout the ages, despite all alterations in mood, in variety, in form. Paul and Lucian, Augustine and Dante, Montaigne and Luther, Bunyan and Milton, Swift and Voltaire, Rousseau and Hazlitt and Shelley and Heine and Goethe, whose works were "one long confession," satirists and mystics and men of the world, and all the long roll of modern poets and philosophers and novelists—all looked in their hearts and wrote, all found that a God had given them the power to express what they had suffered; all felt that out of the depth of that suffering they must go forth to prophesy, to admonish, to persuade. Thoreau and Whitman and Tolstoi and Nietzsche and even Shaw—are they not all in the same case? And what of the pseudo-classicists whenever they are real men? What are the *Lives of the Poets* but the opinions, prejudices, reminiscences, sufferings of Johnson? Why does the preface to the dictionary move us so, or the letter to Chesterfield? The eternal individual human voice. *"Gab mir ein Gott zu sagen was ich leide."*

The epic, objective, anonymous, balladesque that rests upon uniformity, law, and rule, upon the

obliteration of the individual in obedience to chief, state, academy, or convention—this is the barbarous. It is identical with tribal psychology, with mass-mindedness, with supine imprisonment in the delusions of loyalty, cruelty, hatred, and war. Its long and taut discipline has given to the classical elegance and definition of form. But it cannot be said that the great autobiographers from Amos to Augustine and from Montaigne to Goethe have written ill. Their works are apt to be more fragmentary because experience and speech melt only into the horizons of the infinite. But the autobiographic tradition, the tradition of the individual speaking out of the depth of inner experience to his fellow men, creating his form even as he speaks —this tradition is as old as, is older and nobler than, that other of objectivity and rule and obedience and finiteness and superimposed law. It is older and nobler. It has been a saving tradition. Men read epic and ballad and classical tragedy or see the cathedrals of the Middle Ages and admire ferocity in war and the obedience of henchmen and uninquiring faith in baseless myth. They read Amos and Socrates, Montaigne and Goethe and Whitman, and they are set free for the pursuit of goodness and of truth. The autobiographic tradi-

tion is the tradition of a humane culture. Yet the critics babble about egotism and indiscretion.

* * * * *

The autobiographical impulse, changeless in its essential nature of confession and persuasion, has become enormously complicated in modern times by its necessary alliance with the art of prose fiction, of imaginative narrative. Naturally, then, it is from this very art, from this art upon its lower and lowest levels, that the most striking proof of the truth of my tentative argument can be brought. Examine second-rate objective fiction. The stories, whether of love or crime or adventure, are mean and trivial and stupid beyond description. But examine any of those first autobiographical novels by young men and women of which we have had so many in recent years. There is not one without some pertinence, some tang of life, some moment of eloquence, some radiant page. In art invention is nothing; the communication of experience is everything. It is quite true that many of these young men and women have no second work in them. The high awareness of youth was all their stock. A better stock than the endless spinning of yarns. "Talent," writes Thomas Mann in his

great essay on Tolstoi and Goethe, "talent could almost be defined as *Schicksalsfähigkeit*"—as capacity for an individual fate or lot, as high awareness of the trend and quality and character of one's experience and of the relation of that experience to society, to nature, to God. Now this *Schicksalsfähigkeit* may vary very greatly in strength, intensity, productive power. It may only suffice for one youthful novel. It may be rich enough for a long series of great works. He who possesses it is an artist, a *vates;* he who lacks it is an artificer. To take an obvious and common instance: Mr. Sherwood Anderson is *schicksalsfähig;* he finds it intensely difficult both to construct and to speak at all; but he has that essential mark of the artist-prophet. Mr. Zane Grey is an artificer. He tells his tales as another man carves fancy tombstones. He is much more glib, objective, obedient to the prevalent *mores.* He is much more classical. For what is it to be classical but to have ease of form and to repeat the moral and intellectual patterns by which the state has found it easy to keep men in subjection in both peace and war?

* * * * *

It must be clear by now that the autobiographi-

cal impulse of which I have been speaking is a far profounder and more important one than the merely lyrical. The lyric cry at the discrepancy between dream and fulfillment, between our demands on the universe and its penurious gifts—this lovely and ringing and fruitless cry is likely to fall silent more and more before that other graver, richer, more philosophical but equally personal examination and communication of experience. How extraordinarily rich and creative it is! It includes, for instance, the whole of that modern literature which we call realistic or naturalistic. "We describe best," Balzac once wrote, "that which has given us pain." And so the modern novelist, especially the naturalist, from Flaubert to Dreiser, has described the pain he has suffered and the things that hurt him and has tried, by that creative act, to heal himself, to mitigate the pain of others, to rob the evil from which he has suffered of pretension and of power. He has been confessor and prophet, poet, reformer, and revolutionary. The classicists have been quite right in never accepting his "objectivity" of method and results; they have been quite right in allying him with another tradition than their own. For their objective writers accept the world and the state and society as they

are. But Hauptmann and Samuel Butler and even Sinclair Lewis—names can be taken almost at random—describe what has given them pain, proclaim and confess, delineate the evil that is under the sun in order to destroy it, project this world of their pained vision in order to shatter and remold it nearer to the desires of an enlightened and humane intelligence.

* * * * *

Let me anticipate the trivial question which the youngest generation may raise: what becomes of pure art? There is no such thing except in the realm of the merely decorative. The substance of art is human experience, and morals and politics and even metaphysics are merely names for the inevitable modes in which that experience occurs. You may drop or repudiate those names. The groundwork of art which is human experience remains the same.

There is a transcendent answer to this and all similar questions. It is this: art is not life; the two are not identical. The impulse of the artist may be purely autobiographical; he may record nothing but his most intimate experiences; he may—it has happened—be accused of slander and sued for

libel. These are all the follies of the unseeing. When the work is finished—a work of art and not a reporter's notes—it has become transposed into another and more intelligible world; it has become detached from the world of mere reality and transferred by form and creative interpretation and the prophetic activity of the artist beyond the sphere of mere resemblance into one where it shares separateness and self-sustainingness with other phenomena of the major order. The tree is not the seed, nor art the original suffering and substance that gave it birth. But experience and free speech born of experience are its impulse and its mood and will be its impulse and its mood increasingly. These and not generalization and conformity. The old, old controversy between classical and romantic, objective and subjective, is not so much destroyed as transcended. The function of literature is not to multiply the bad examples of old, but to help save the world.

Part One: Englishmen

HAZLITT

THE inner circle of the admirers of Hazlitt, a modest but devoted company, have always entertained a feeling, vague but none the less certain, that men and time had done but rude justice to the writer of whose true greatness they could admit no doubt. All his contemporaries outstripped him in the race for fame. The *Essays of Elia* were a household word where the existence of *Table Talk* was unknown. Critics engaged in conflicts with no recollection of the fact that Hazlitt had settled these conflicts for all time. Learned men announced discoveries that he had made nearly a hundred years ago. There clung to his memory, his fame, his work, his human personality a shadow, a blur, an ugly strangeness. One suspected here the dim presence of old misunderstandings and forgotten slanders. But the various half-hearted studies and biographies brought no new light. His matchless sagacity about men and affairs, his racy eloquence unborrowed but of the ardor of his mind and heart, his consummate services to creative criticism—these things almost per-

suaded Stevenson to undertake a biography. But Stevenson's squeamishness was offended by the *Liber Amoris*. He was like the well-known type of teacher who lectures on Goethe and omits to mention—Christiane Vulpius. The Victorian period fought shy of Hazlitt. His moral character did not seem pleasant nor his opinions safe. The legend of the conservatives was stamped as historic truth; Browning's just jibe at Wordsworth was forgotten; Southey became a sort of saint. It was the apotheosis of those who had left "the good old cause, the progress and freedom of the race," for a "handful of silver," for a "riband to stick in their coats."

All that is over at last. With patient industry, with entire candor, with excellent skill, Mr. P. P. Howe has gathered and set down the facts of Hazlitt's life.[1] His book is full and final and a contribution of the first order to the history of Hazlitt and his period. But Hr. Howe, as was his right, has abstained almost wholly from interpretative comment. A sly little aside is all he ever permits himself. The consequence is that, so far at least, the reviewers of the book have praised but have not really used it, and have communicated but little

[1] *The Life of William Hazlitt.* By P. P. Howe.

of that entire clarification of Hazlitt's character and repute which its pages afford.

We see him first in the miniature painted by his brother John, a frail, dreamy, ardent boy with eyes whose vision is already turned inward. At seventeen he lives, probably as a flight from other ardors, in the icy ones of pure thought; he lives with Hume, Berkeley, Hobbes. At twenty he reads the *Contrat Social* and is dedicated to the cause of justice and freedom, to "truth not triumph" forever. But he has not yet found speech; he is provincial in dress, manner, aspect. He feels with mad keenness the discrepancies between his inward being and his outward show and this common misfortune of the intravert settles, also a common fate, in the life of love, of sex. "He was excessively shy," we hear from Crabb Robinson, "and in company the girls always made game of him. He had a horror of the society of ladies, especially of smart and handsome and modest young women. The prettiest girl of our parties about this time was Miss Kitchener. She used to drive him mad by teasing him." One need be no psycho-analyst to observe the defensive nature of this "horror" nor the overwhelming but hopeless attraction that sought to mask its defeat as distaste. No wonder

that, a very few years later, on a visit to Wordsworth in the Lake country, he tried to approach a simple country girl. The "pretty village jilt" feigned to like him, caused him to commit himself, and then delivered him up to the laughter of the villagers. Again, it takes no psycho-analyst to estimate the impact of this shock on his sexual self-esteem and so on his whole nature. Nor need one anticipate by adding that, in the year of Waterloo, when Hazlitt pleaded for peace without victory as the humane, healing, decent hope of men, Wordsworth and his colleagues changed this pathetic episode of Hazlitt's youth into a violent and ugly slander. The episode, human nature being what it is, was bound to repeat itself. In 1806 came the "frenzy for Sally Sheperd" who never "pretended to love him," and so the abortive character of that frenzy tightened the grip of the furious defenses by which his psyche sought to save his self-esteem. "There were young girls," we find Lamb writing, "and he sat and frowned blacker and blacker, indignant that there should be such a thing as youth and beauty, till he tore me away before supper in perfect misery, and owned he could not bear young girls." Could any words record more clearly the utter agony of yearning

for youth and beauty which Hazlitt felt or, on the other hand, the complete innocence of any insight into human nature on the writer's part?

Such a situation could have but one upshot. Mary Lamb had a friend, a Miss Sarah Stoddard, "no longer in her first youth . . . much concerned with the problem of marriage." She had, moreover, a tiny property and Hazlitt was, as usual, wretchedly poor. One may be sure that this lady took the initiative, briefly healed the wounds dealt him by his defeat in the sex-struggle, and so married him. It is at least certain that this marriage, which in the Lamb circle was welcomed partly "for the joke's sake," was never a source of either delight or comfort and could be declared a "dismal failure" in 1820.

The rest of Hazlitt's story could now be readily predicted by any modern psychologist. In 1822, at the age of forty-four, he felt that his last chance must come now or never. He was on the downward slope; youth, beauty, and delight, which come to "emperor and clown," had passed him by. He fell in love with Sarah Walker, the daughter of his lodging-house keeper, and at last thought he "beheld a gentle face turn gently" upon his. Mrs. Hazlitt was quite willing to coöperate in the

"dissolution of their ill-advised connection in marriage" and Hazlitt hastened to Scotland to qualify by residence for divorce. Here, believing that Miss Walker's devotion equaled his own, he illustrated Gourmont's saying that each new love renews the sources of life by composing, within a single month, an entire volume of his most memorable essays. The divorce was granted. He hastened back to London to discover that Sarah Walker wanted nothing of him but his gifts and had had another lover, in the gross sense of the word, during the entire period of their acquaintance. "Hazlitt's torture," Haydon wrote to Miss Mitford, "is beyond expression; the girl really excited in him devoted and intense love." Is it surprising that he passed whole nights watching the girl's door, that he published the *Liber Amoris*, that he was guilty of much extravagance and some downright folly? He had set the last hope of his powerful, ardent, defeated nature upon this adventure. "I had courted thought, I had felt pain, and love turned away his face from me." Here is the source of those moving passages that occur in essay after essay and ring all possible changes upon the theme of Johnson's lines:

> Shall beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
> Nor claim the triumph of a letter'd heart?

The situation may have its aspect of humor from without; it is pure tragedy from within. There is about it at least none of the moral shabbiness with which Wordsworth and the Victorians sought to stain Hazlitt's character. Nor is there any such stain in his second, scarcely more fortunate marriage, as there is assuredly nothing but keen pathos in that last glimpse we get of him "fathoms deep in love" with Miss Mordaunt of the Haymarket Theatre—he now an elderly man and she never nearer him than on the stage—who was then "in the first bloom and freshness of her youth and beauty."

Why were his misfortunes and defeats turned into moral errors by his contemporaries? Why did they paint him, whose portraits in the *Spirit of the Age* are, upon an objective examination of facts and men, exemplars of a high magnanimity, as malignant, disloyal, wasplike? Because he was on the wrong side politically. Because he was almost a defeatist, almost a pacifist, almost pro-French during the Napoleonic wars and determined to resist with all his might the black reaction that settled down over Europe after Waterloo. In

1814 he wrote: "If we are to limit our hostility to others only with their destruction, we impose the adoption of the same principle on them as their only means of safety." Imagine these words written by a publicist and critic in 1917, and Hazlitt's case is clear enough. It was but human that in 1816 he should have remarked that, in a new edition of his poems, Wordsworth retained a sonnet on the king's "noble fortitude" during the late war, and quietly dropped the "Female Vagrant," which described the sufferings of the poor during the same period. When Southey, in 1817, pleaded that the crime of seditious libel should be punished by transportation, so that the country could be rid of Cobbett and Hunt and Hazlitt, the last named naturally recalled the "Wat Tyler" of Southey's own youth and described in true and telling terms his passage from ultra-Jacobinism to ultra-royalism. When, finally, Coleridge declared that toward all these liberals he had a feeling "more like hatred than I ever bore to other flesh and blood," it was Hazlitt who pointed out that in 1794 the "damaged archangel" had said: "Truth should be spoken at all times, but more especially at those times when to speak truth is dangerous." And as if that were not enough he declared that

"war in itself is a thriving, sensible traffic only to cannibals." So the *Quarterly* and later *Blackwood's* defamed and slandered him in unmeasured terms and in a spirit of personal abuse that is happily no longer possible. But these things were forgotten. The legend of the other side prevailed. Lockhart wrote the *Life of Scott* and Lang the *Life of Lockhart* and the biographers of Wordsworth and Coleridge and Southey were all models of Victorian reticence and reverence. Wordsworth's French daughter had never been heard of, and so his declaration that "the miscreant Hazlitt is not a proper person to be admitted into respectable society" threw its long shadow into the future, blunted the edge of Charles Lamb's noble praise of his friend, surrounded Hazlitt's name with that atmosphere of suspicion and moral obliquity which has clung to it until today. The truth is plain. Hazlitt was in the opposition. In war he pleaded for peace, in reaction for liberty. He changed neither his politics nor his regard for truth. And in his period the weapons of political controversy which even great poets did not disdain to use, were clear falsehood, personal slander, scurrilous verbiage. He was unbending to the last. Bereft of hope and health and near his death, he saluted the

Revolution of the Three Days in 1830 as "like a resurrection from the dead and as showing plainly that liberty, too, has in it a spirit of life." But his reputation as a man and a writer was depressed for several generations and is not yet on the right level of either his tragic fate or his shining genius.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

A STRANGE indifference surrounds the centenary of Matthew Arnold. Was it not but the other day that his name was upon all lips, his example in all minds, that every good liberal quoted him, and every lover of great verse lived with his works? Has his influence been transcended? Has his poetry faded or has its substance, like the substance of so much Victorian work, come to seem not for all time but strictly for one age?

No; the matter stands quite otherwise. If there is quiet about his name today it is because his thought and teaching have been so absorbed into the very current of our age that we are no more consciously aware of them than we are of our pulses and our blood. We all talk Arnold, think Arnold, preach and propagate Arnold. In the dead and almost fabled 'sixties of the nineteenth century he discovered Main Street with its "imperturbable self-satisfaction," its devastating "provinciality," its dangerous hostility to the "free play of the mind," to any "flexibility of the intelligence." He discovered the eternal Philis-

tine of an industrialized and standardized civilization, who boasts of the output of his factories and the speed of his trains and never stops to consider that these "trains only carry him from an illiberal, dismal life at Islington to an illiberal, dismal life at Camberwell." It was Arnold who diagnosed the central Philistine heresy of substituting means for ends. "Freedom, like industry, is a very good horse to ride—but to ride somewhere."

He discovered Main Street; he discovered Babbitt; he discovered Mr. Mencken's neo-Puritans, reformers, hundred-per-centers. "My brother Saxons, as is well known, have a terrible way with them of wanting to improve everything but themselves off the face of the earth." He added, "I myself have no such passion for finding nothing but myself everywhere." He used a rapier rather than a bludgeon; the nicknames which he gave to the enemies of the "children of light" were inspired by an elegant wit and high-bred malice. There is no one among us who would call our conventional political activities "a Thyestian banquet of claptrap." But we are all thinking, saying, proclaiming precisely that in somewhat other terms. How tonic it would be to have all our warm young liberals re-read *Culture and Anarchy*, which was

published in 1869, and *Friendship's Garland*, which appeared two years later! How magnificent it would be could they be turned aside from transitory dreams and schemes and panaceas and embrace the ideal and the work which alone, as Arnold pointed out, could cure the evils which he and they alike combat—"the work of making human life, hampered by a past which it has outgrown, natural and rational."

His immediate contemporaries belittled his publicistic activity, the criticism he exercised upon civilization in its totality. The Manchester people thought that machinery and money would save the world; even Mr. Frederic Harrison sneered at Arnold as being a "kid-glove philosopher," what we would now call a vicious high-brow. Arnold was saddened but not abashed. He knew then what recent history has proved through blood and fire. Nothing can save the world except that "free play of the mind" for which he was always pleading, nothing but hard and lucid thinking, nothing but the separation of concepts from myths.

The hostility of cultivated Philistia tended, then, to emphasize primarily his criticism of literature. But even this criticism when it was at its freshest and keenest, as in the essays on "The

Function of Criticism," on "Academies," and on "Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment," embraced worlds of both perception and reasoning which the ordinary critic of letters had never permitted himself to tread. The second volume of the famous *Essays in Criticism* is thinner in substance and more rigid in temper. Arnold's estimate of Wordsworth was highly personal and of Shelley irritable and absurd. But in these writings, as well as in the delectable "Lectures on Translating Homer," he triumphantly illustrated the fact that literature must be treated with the living mind and the living spirit, that it can be neither labeled nor measured. And throughout the minor essays he set again and again an example of the highest humanism. Thus he revered Dante as a man and as the chief practitioner of the "grand style" in its mood of severity. But when a British editor desired to endear the Florentine to Manchester by constructing for him a conventional history, Arnold serenely brushed the man aside. "I can quite believe the tradition which represents him as not having lived happily with his wife. I can even believe an assertion of Boccaccio that Dante's conduct was at times exceedingly irregular. We know how the followers of the spiritual life tend to be anti-

nomian in what belongs to the outward life." He smiled at the notion of turning Dante into the hero of a "sentimental but strictly virtuous novel." You have but to test Arnold at any crucial point like that. Not for nothing was he throughout life a disciple of Goethe. Not for nothing did he stigmatize

> The barren optimistic sophistries
> Of comfortable moles whom what they do
> Teaches the limit of the just and true.

Like the Marcus Aurelius of his portraiture, he is "wise, just, self-governed, serene."

His poetry, in the decline of Victorian luscious-ness, got the reputation of being a little hard and cold. People repeat this criticism, we suspect, without rereading the verse. It has, in many passages, a mellow brightness as of moonlit hills or fountains under stars. But it has also passion, as in the highest lyrics, "Philomela" and "Isolation," or in the great last section of "Tristram and Iseult," and it has magic in whole poems—"In Utrumque Paratus," the strangely neglected Switzerland lyrics, the divine songs of Callicles, and in single lines such as that incomparable one from "Sohrab and Rustrum":

And youth and bloom and this delightful world.

It has, finally, despite querulous gainsayers, constant seriousness and satisfactoriness of substance. Granting that the son of Arnold of Rugby was more troubled over the decay of Christian dogma than we are, it should be remembered that that decay symbolized for him a fact of equal gravity to ourselves—the loss of a rational universe in which to be at home. But he never doubted how a new world was to be built—by justice and by reason, not by claptrap and myth. Of victory in that conflict he was never sure, of its inevitableness and glory always:

> Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
> Let the victors, when they come,
> When the forts of folly fall,
> Find thy body by the wall!

JOHN MORLEY

THE writers and statesmen of the last generation are passing. And each time that another lays down the burdens of earth, the journalists tell us that the last of the Victorians is gone. In their sense it is not true. Of the sentimental idyllic Victorianism, of the period of the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin of the mind, hosts of survivors are in our midst. It is not so with that other group and strain and tradition which, contrary to the popular notion, rendered the reign of Victoria illustrious in the annals of England and the world. Of that group John Morley was indeed the last survivor. One thinks of him truly as *ultimus Romanorum*. From a world torn asunder by wild doctrinaires and hysterical visionaries there is gone the last of those intellects whose sovereign lucidity, noble poise, ultimate tolerance, were as a beacon and light and guide from the publication of the early works of John Stuart Mill until today.

Morley was the son of a Lancashire surgeon. He was lawyer, journalist, philosopher, statesman. Immediately on leaving Oxford he commenced

writing for the *Saturday Review;* later he was associated with the editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and for fifteen years he edited the *Fortnightly Review.* He entered Parliament in 1883 as an advanced Gladstonian Liberal; he became, in time, Chief Secretary for Ireland; upon his retirement from Politics in 1914 he was President of the Council and Secretary of State for India. Among his services as a statesman must be accounted his plans for constitutional reforms in India which, had they been carried out in time, would have saved both Britain and India long years of enmity and conflict, his early advocacy of a liberal policy toward Ireland, his resignation from the ministry upon the British declaration of war in 1914. Upon the causes of this resignation —Trevelyan and John Burns, it will be remembered, went with him—Morley was silent. He was in his seventy-sixth year. He had never been a friend of futile tumult and petty passions. But the explanation which will some day be given to the world in the third volume, yet unpublished, of his memoirs, cannot be obscure, at least in its main outlines, to any attentive reader of the essay on "The Expansion of England" in the third volume of his *Miscellanies.* He knew that the "imperial-

ist or bombastic school" was a school of traders and money-changers, that the imperialist wars of the industrialist age were traders' and money-changers' wars. He remarked with quiet irony then that "war is often entered upon even in our own virtuous days without preliminary consent from Parliament," and placed on the same basis of imperialist advantage and moral claptrap the paying of money "for a war, say, for the defense of Afghanistan against Russia, or for the defense of Belgian neutrality."

These things, these actions that loom so gigantically in the eyes of the world, are quickly dwarfed and soon recede. John Morley will be remembered by his books, the *Voltaire*, the *Rousseau*, the *Life of Gladstone*, the treatise *On Compromise*, above all, the *Critical Miscellanies*. Today these sober volumes are not, we fear, very widely read. There is no vain striving and crying in them; there are no plumes or banners. People read Chesterton and Kipling, and drive their chariots ever more madly into the barbarous realms of religious and patriotic myth. It was from precisely that sort of picturesque but deadly barbarism that the Utilitarians, the Mills, father and son, Matthew Arnold and Leslie Stephen, Huxley and

Morley, were anxious to save both their countrymen and mankind. Morley said of John Stuart Mill that "with his reputation will stand or fall the intellectual repute of a whole generation of his countrymen." A later generation's intellectual repute has already fallen with its neglect of John Morley. It made him a peer of the realm of England; of his spirit and of the spirit of his thought and counsels it neither knew anything nor wanted to know anything. His later years were spent in a world full of fire-eating myth-mongers and absolutists and empty opportunists. The voice of reason was silenced; the voice of Lloyd George prevailed.

The Mills, father and son, Arnold and Stephen, Huxley and Morley—these men all had what Morley so happily called the "sensibility of the intellect." They wanted honor among minds. They held self-deception and its consequent muddling to be somewhat less than human. They wanted not blindly to do what is commonly called "good" and is often both cruel and stupid; they wanted, in Morley's words, "to find out what the good is—which is harder." They were all very fond of the eighteenth century and very positivistic in temper, and fought shy of metaphysics.

Yet they were far more philosophic than the metaphysicians who are so often poets gone wrong and build up huge systems to ground and buttress the idealistic assumptions that give them a pleasant feeling. Arnold was, of course, a great poet and so both richer and more variable of nature than the others. But he, with Mill and Morley, wanted "reason and the will of God to prevail," and it is significant that Morley, like Arnold, was a great Wordsworthian on Wordsworth's realistic and genuine and non-theological side.

Of that whole school and tradition the works of Morley are the last and not the least enduring monument. His prose was like his temper and his doctrine—weighty, serene, and unadorned. Its sobriety was natural, and yet perhaps it was heightened by his fear of exaggeration and excess. Often a faint glow warms it, when he thinks of Wordsworth or Goethe, or speaks of his master, John Stuart Mill, or discourses on that tolerance, on that noble reasonableness which, alone, according to him, and to his teachers and friends, can mitigate the troubles of mankind. His pages are always grave and wise and liberal.

Liberal! The word threatens to fall into disrepute. But that is due to a misconception. The

great philosophic British liberals, Mill and Morley, never turned their backs upon the path on which their thinking led them. They were quite ready to face radical change in both the moral and the social life of mankind. Their liberalism was a matter of temper. They wanted change to come through reason and such action as grows out of the exercise of the reason. They were averse from red flags as well as from rebels. They expected salvation from no kind of violence, no ungoverned passion, no panacea or myth, old or new. It is permissible and easy to argue that, amid the hot and desperate needs of the world, their word is not the last. It remains true that their word is a word never to be forgotten, never to be unheeded except at our extreme peril. And the last great speaker of that word of truth and reason was John Morley.

SAINTSBURY

IT IS time that a tribute be paid to George Saintsbury.[1] His audience, vast almost as that of a popular novelist, is not a grateful and, despite its official connection with literature, not an articulate one. How many wretched candidates for collegiate degrees, lower or higher, have not burned the oil of preëxamination midnights in order to pore over a few, at least, of his ten thousand pages; how many teachers of English in innumerable institutions of all varieties and grades of what is euphemistically known as learning have not, innocent of all contact with the original documents, derived their pedagogical material, and thus their bread and butter too, from the pages of the *Short History of English Literature*, the histories of Elizabethan and nineteenth-century literature, and even, if they aspired very high, the *History of English Prosody*, the *History of Criticism*, the *English Prose Rhythms*, the *Periods of European Literature*, the many and mighty editions of the

[1] *The Collected Essays and Papers of George Saintsbury. 1875-1920.* Three volumes.

giants that were before the Flood. The works of George Saintsbury, a noble phalanx of volumes, have won a hundred obscure but vital battles; knowledge and wisdom have sat on their right hand and place and preferment on their left. Yet if, today, you ask the younger generation of the pundits concerning him you get but one answer, "But the man can't write worth a continental!"

It is perfectly true that Professor Saintsbury writes well in neither the older nor the newer sense. He is, Heaven knows, neither a Swift nor a Pater, neither a Hazlitt nor an Arnold. But, in the first place, he has himself explained in a by no means ill-written passage that he is one whose ears, but not, alas! whose lips, the Muse has touched, and in the second place, there is something ungenerous, finicky, and trifling in picking out cacophonous sentences from the works of a writer whose innumerable pages, though without grace, fine precision, high elegance, have the unfailing appeal of unaging vivacity, inexhaustible enthusiasm, delightful human warmth. I know of one reader, at least, a reader by no means insensitive to style, who has long read and still reads Saintsbury with pleasure, with profit, with amusement, and who

would not give him up for a wilderness of Walter Raleighs or even Gilbert Chestertons, for costive preciosity or the passionate clamor of fools.

And this is true, it should be remarked, despite the fact that the reader in question differs irreconcilably from Professor Saintsbury on every issue of man's philosophical and active life. For Saintsbury is a tory, a magnificent and belligerent tory, a tory whose cocksureness, fortified by a formidable logical apparatus, has something at once amusing and sublime. If one wants toryism, here one will get it for one's money. Saintsbury is no Laodicean. In his toryism there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning. The evil modern "reign of shoddy" began with the first Reform Bill. Since then the world has been going straight to the devil. Leigh Hunt was quite properly sent to prison; all Irish discontent is the work of romantic young fools; a gentleman will consent to obey a king but not a mob; democracy is not only futile, but downright foolish. In all these matters Saintsbury argues with logical correctness and amusing unfairness. He starts out with the assumption that these matters, intricate as organisms, desperate as death, are as plain as a pikestaff and as

adjustable as nose-glasses. Thus, for instance, in his extremely witty and pertinent and at a dozen points sound *Thoughts on Republics* he quietly omits the crucial fact that all philosophical modern democrats from Mill to the present have been well aware of the fact that without the adequate and proportionate representation of every minority, however small, however perverse, the democratic experiment is indeed not only a joke, but a bad joke. But the point is that you really don't want Saintsbury to be different. He is a survival, but a splendid one. Who but the grand old tory that he is could, a critic of literature by profession, have written his notes on a wine cellar or his noble and luscious essays on the cookery of the partridge and the grouse? Reading these exercitations one almost shares that nostalgia for the past which is at the romantic core of all his personal and political views and sighs, like himself, for an age of *otium cum dignitate*, of mighty trenchermen and merry consumers of toddy, of liquor and learning, of at least apparent order when the proletarian knew his place and the king was on his throne and the slave in his cotton-field and the Jew in his Ghetto. Yes, one shares his nostalgia for a moment until there

creeps back the one thing the tory lacks—imaginative sympathy. For the tory would have to stop being a tory the moment he felt, *felt* what it must have been to be that proletarian, that slave, that Jew.

I have lingered over Professor Saintsbury's non-literary opinions and personality since I do not remember having ever seen a printed word on either. But the fact that he is an uncompromising romanticist by temper probably accounts for the freedom and soundness of his æsthetic judgments. For at this point he is consummate. Wherever his vast and varied and vital learning does not fail him, as it does, for instance, in German literature since Goethe, his literary appreciations are all but unrivaled. Test him at any point, in respect of any author in the whole range of ancient, of mediæval, of modern English, French, and Italian literature, you will find his purely or almost purely impressionistic judgments practically unerring. Even in literatures that he knows ill he has but to come in contact with a document to see its value. He stumbled upon the diaries of Grillparzer and at once gave the Austrian dramatist his just place in the history of criticism. Nor has he ever, or, as he

himself would say, scarcely ever, let his extra-literary prejudices color his critical views. He lets his altogether noble love of letters shine upon the just and the unjust. Hazlitt may have been an ill-tempered libertarian and Shelley a full-fledged Bolshevist. It does not matter to Professor Saintsbury. When it comes to beauty this tory knows no parties. Beauty is, after all, what he worships, and his toryism is nothing but terror lest the sum of beauty be diminished upon earth.

His highest service will be seen, I think, to have been his clarification of critical theory. He has carried the war against preceptist, absolutist, *a priori* criticism into the very academic towers and citadels where it was most strongly protected. His conservatism as a man and his equipment as a scholar gained him a hearing where all other voices would have been discredited. And in this central matter he has been tireless and fearless. No one has done more, no one has done as much, to establish the truth that in art there is no rule except that there is no rule, that creative expression is and must be free, and that only from a work itself can the rules by which it is to be judged be derived. And it is not without a tinge of irony that Professor Saintsbury seems to be and always to have

been totally unaware of the fact that if he had ever permitted himself to transfer these views of his from one domain of the human spirit to any other the cloud-capped towers and palaces of his toryism would have faded at once like an insubstantial pageant and left not a rack behind.

THE AGONY OF A VICTORIAN[1]

MR. GOSSE is troubled. When Sully-Prudhomme was elected to the French Academy in 1881, he was acclaimed as the best lyric poet of the age; in 1908 Remy de Gourmont called his verse balderdash. Then, recently, came Mr. Lytton Strachey with his glittering scalpel and his icy smile. Mr. Gosse is bravely determined not to be a mere praiser of time past. His poise is beautiful; he is immensely urbane to the younger critic and grants the latter's contentions right and left. But he cannot hide the sadness in his heart at the thought of the cold young men with something inscrutable in their faces who despise so much that is venerable and beautiful to him. "The whole study of the fine arts would lead to despair," he exclaims, if we were to admit "that no conceivable principle of taste exists!" He wants a standard and a criterion wherewith to confound so much destructive violence and save the gods of his own youth.

He is really always on the verge of understand-

[1] *Some Diversions of a Man of Letters.* By Edmund Gosse.

ing the case of those young men, but he lets that understanding slip from his mind. Some inner censor, some piety toward his own "days of emotional freshness," will not let him grasp and hold it. He admits that of all the great Victorians the younger poets have been influenced by Matthew Arnold alone; he knows, despite an inhibited silence on this point, that no reaction has shaken the solidity of John Stuart Mill's fame; he adds his blows to the destruction of the Tennyson legend, and to the exposure of the pompous prigs who lied to save the public a knowledge of their idol's appetite for praise and port; he is aware that Sully-Prudhomme was capable of proving in one didactic epic that justice inhabits man's consciousness alone, which is an empty platitude, and in another that indiscriminate self-sacrifice is the only source of happiness, which is a shallow and a dangerous one. Yet Mr. Gosse refuses to draw the plain inference from the facts before him. The reaction that counts has set in against those Victorians whom "it hurt to think," who followed and never led the general thought of a confused and timid period, of whom the great and simple words of Matthew Arnold,

> When the forts of folly fall,
> Find thy body by the wall,

could never have been spoken.

Yet from Remy de Gourmont, the very critic whom he quotes, Mr. Gosse might have learned the answer to his troubled question. *"En littérature, le fond des choses a une importance absolue; aucune des variétés de la littérature ne peut se soustraire à la nécessité de creuser des fondations et de les maçonner solidement."* And this foundation of literature which must be deeply sunk and solidly builded is the creative artist's breadth and intensity of experience and his own veracity toward it. But that is precisely the thing which Mr. Gosse himself is far too Victorian to know, and on which he finally gives himself away with a pathetic helplessness. He celebrates the soldier poets of England in the set terms of a traditional eloquence. He speaks in the strains of Southey on Nelson concerning all those whose sentiments were tribal and correct. He comes to Siegfried Sassoon, and patronizes him uneasily. "He may not always have thought correctly, nor have recorded his impressions with proper circumspection, but his honesty must be respectfully acknowledged." Instinctively, Mr. Gosse assumes here that mass

thinking is correct thinking and that the unique experiences of the creative vision are to be uttered with "proper circumspection." Those deadly words sum up everything in the Victorian age that the world, to save itself, must willingly let die. Does Mr. Gosse suppose that Euripides or Shakespeare or Goethe wrote with "proper circumspection," one eye carefully cocked at the contemporary pillars of society? He knows that their loyalty belonged to their personal experience and to their personal vision alone. But a Victorian cannot apply the wild ways of the great solitaries to his own time.

Since, then, Mr. Gosse will not let himself assign the anti-Victorian reaction to its true causes, he shifts the issue to the old question of the "fluctuations of taste," asks "for the fixed and permanent element in beauty," and wonders over the passing of the "laws of style." Here, too, his troubled soul could easily find peace. The varieties of æsthetic beauty are, happily, as infinite as the faces and the forms of men. Reactions against a definite variety are brief and impermanent. As consciousness itself cannot persist without the stimulus of change, so the æsthetic sensibilities need to be refreshed and stirred anew. We are still cloyed

by the rich and rounded forms of the Victorians, but the beauty of those forms stands in no danger of permanent decay. The contemporaries of Hayley shuddered at the closed couplet. Today we hear once more the brilliant energy and suave incisiveness of Pope's best passages. New thoughts and perceptions create their own forms, and the artist, as Goethe said, works from within outward. And whatever in these thoughts and perceptions is humanly valid, whatever enriches or interprets the experience of the race, will build itself a form whose beauty transcends the fluctuations of some temporary liking. The music of Catullus and Shelley, of Heine and Leconte de Lisle, is equally native to a well-attuned ear. No beauty perishes save one built on foundations of stubble. Time will not darken the sunset glow and surge of "Ulysses" or "The Lotus Eaters"; it has already dealt with the pretentious inanities of "The Princess." The music of Shelley sounds clearer to us than Wordsworth's because it never arose from an impossible religion or a shabby set of moral prejudices. But wherever the beauty of Wordsworth is disengaged from that religion and those prejudices it is no less secure than Shelley's.

But this statement of the possibilities of beauty,

infinite as the varieties of experience that gave it birth, would not satisfy Mr. Gosse. He would still want a constant element in the abstract form itself, a fixed point amid the variables. Like all his generation, he is not happy in a world of change nor on a road which is also the goal. Now there is no doubt that some such constant element exists. Poetry being, like music, an art in time, its beauty is somehow dependent on the element of rhythm which, in its turn, conforms to something in the biological character of man himself. The psychologist and physiologist have something to say about that and will have more to say in time. But it is hard to see what comfort the isolation and definition of this constant element in the beauty of poetic forms would give the humanistic critic or the lover of art. It could never be used as a criterion or as a law of poetics. Like the immanent laws of nature, it would merely tell us something concerning the inner nature of poetry whenever or in whatever form it may appear. To the critic, however, the wonder and the delight are in the very multiformity of experience and expression, in the heightening of our very consciousness of life by the eternal adventure of art.

Part Two: Americans

SANTAYANA[1]

I

AMONG the spiritual adventures of our age not the least memorable is this: that a Spanish child was brought to the United States, grew to manhood here without yielding by a hair's-breadth to the forces of his environment, studied and taught philosophy for a number of years, wrote the most perfect English prose yet produced on this continent, and retired to the bosom of that Latin civilization which only his body, never his heart and mind, had left. Nor was it America alone that had no power to touch the mind of George Santayana. That style of bronze and ivory, those ripe and classical locutions, those severe felicities, serve to express a noble and melancholy gesture of disdain for all the intellectual turmoil, the eagerness, the restless striving, the inexpugnable romanticism of the Germanic world. Protestantism is, in Mr. Santayana's eyes, an "underlying Teutonic

[1] *Little Essays Drawn from the Writings of George Santayana.* By Logan Pearsall Smith. With the collaboration of the author.

mood" which "is anterior to Christianity and can survive it"; the "philosophical incoherence" of Shakespeare makes this thinker "wonder whether the Northern mind, even in him, did not remain morose and barbarous at its inmost core." The mental flexibility and creative impulse that would reëxamine the grounds of knowledge, rechart the seas of life, and build the world anew, both seem to Mr. Santayana mere "visionary insolence." He watches the seething barbarians as a gentleman of ancient lineage may watch the antics of a noisy upstart.

In the world seen through his temperament philosophy is the explication and support of one great tradition. He is a Christian Stoic. A finely balanced blending of Pagan freedom with Christian symbolism seems to him the note of that Latin civilization which he holds to be the only civilization of the Western World. Within it life has been charted and its values long known and declared; within it freedom of mind can be attained by "a reasonable deference" to a perfect religion that has "the graciousness and naturalness of an ancestral accent," and human existence can be wholly sweet and decorous. Beyond it the heathen rage. In the life of reason which flourishes only

within that great tradition there is possible "a consistent moral attitude toward all things of this world," a "hierarchy of goods and evils," and a religion which, since it "seizes the essence of human life, ought to be eternal"; in that charmed realm no one doubts the claim of traditional morality since it "speaks for a typical human will chastened by a typical human experience," and hence to the ripe and detached mind dwelling there "orthodoxy must always appear right and heresy wrong"; there, finally, men abstain from wild quests and vain yearnings, but are content with "food, children, victory, knowledge" and are willing to live and to die for these. It is true that even there "religious doctrines would do well to withdraw their pretensions to be dealing with matters of fact." But woe to the indecorous rationalist who would attack those doctrines for that reason and disregard the precious "habits of thought" from which they sprang.

This cultural vision constitutes the center of Mr. Santayana's philosophy. Its fringes and outlying wastes tell a bleaker and more elemental story in which all values are relative, patriotism is subordinate to both happiness and truth, and the whole need of morality is derived from the exist-

ence of pain and danger and the consequent occasions of pity. But, like smaller men, he can keep his cosmic vision and his unrelenting analysis from surging into the cultural and artistic picture of life which he desires to be the temporal dwelling of his soul. He needs Plato and St. Thomas Aquinas, a cathedral whose paintings bring to his eye the ancient pact of Rome and Galilee, and an old peasant woman lighting a candle at St. Anthony's altar. His heart is filled with the splendor of the continuity and universality of that great tradition in which he and the peasant woman, the life of reason and the life of faith, can be equally contented and at home.

The heathen—Americans, English, Germans—are so in their "moral and essential nature" because they do not acknowledge the sufficingness of the great Roman-Christian tradition. They are heathen because "they possess no authoritative wisdom, or reject the authority of what wisdom they have." Their minds, like Shelley's, are "thoroughly disinherited," and they have been led astray by the "malicious psychology," of the group of thinkers who, from Hume to Kant, sought to analyze the processes and limitations of human knowledge. Thus the heathen have become dis-

contented with the institutions which seem to Mr. Santayana noble with age and drenched with the savor of living; they reject the moral allegory of Christianity and the order and finished beauty which, since they profoundly satisfy his sensibilities, he identifies in the terms of so sovereign an eloquence with the life of reason.

To establish the fallacy of this sharp division of Western mankind into Latin and heathen is, on its own philosophical ground, not difficult. Mr. Santayana's heathen is a pure fiction of controversial and poetic origin. No man, Latin or Germanic, rejects "authoritative wisdom," for the plain reason that none exists. So soon as we exclude, as Mr. Santayana unequivocally does, the hypothesis of revelation, no wisdom can have the attribute of absolute and permanent authoritativeness. It is true that the great scriptures of mankind contain a vast fund of human experience. It is equally true that the authors of these scriptures constantly misinterpreted both the facts and the character of experience through want of knowledge and through theological inhibitions of thought. Hence it is not unreasonable to make the first note of a civilized mind the critical impulse to sift this funded experience and to reject partially or wholly the chart

of life derived from it. Barbarism may even be held to reside in accepting the validity of a moral symbolism and a cosmic poetry which arise largely and demonstrably from the fears and the pathetic errors of primitive man and display, in every active influence on human life, some trace of their lowly and irrational origin. The life of reason, far from straining to find new grounds for old traditions, however venerable and beautiful, might rather be thought of as residing in a reëxamination of human experience as well as of the world which is the theater of that experience. Thus only, to avoid the ugly word progressive, can its activity be a creative one; thus only can it increase the harmony between man and nature and the fitness for human habitation of the institutions of organized society. It is not from Mr. Santayana's reason, however, but from his temperament, that these simple considerations are excluded. "Few revolutionists would be such," he says in connection with Shelley, "if they were heirs to a baronetcy." That moment of petulance betrays him. He loves order, antiquity, decorum—the broken shrine, the wayside cross, the verse of Lucretius, the rich phrases of the Roman liturgy. Despite the magnificent and searching sagacity of a thousand iso-

lated sayings, his philosophy is not a philosophy at all, but a spiritual epic in praise of all those forms of life and beauty which early secured his instinctive loyalty and love. It is the Divine Comedy of a great artist forsaken in an alien age by both verse and God, but building on the frontiers of heathendom a last rampart to guard the ideals which he would make as imperishable as he believes them to be excellent.

II [1]

Long ago Anatole France called history, science, and philosophy the beautiful romance with which man, forever imprisoned in his subjective dream, builds about him a visionary world in which to live. Mr. Santayana, who detests the "arrogant" idealism of the Germans from which Anatole France drew his notion, nevertheless echoes and repeats it when he speaks of the "studious daylight fiction which we call history and philosophy." The difference between the two thinkers is that Mr. Santayana accepts science, and the universe as science depicts it, as incontrovertibly real. He is

[1] *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies.* By George Santayana.

no universal skeptic. He glances at the godless cosmos of sickening distances and unimaginable masses and believes. He believes and trembles. Above it and beyond it the civilized man must build up a world of human values and traditions in which his real life is to be passed. He who disturbs that world and lets the intolerable brightness of the cold spaces of the universe stream in is a barbarian and disloyal to the decencies and sanctities of man.

So far, so good. One may indeed ask whether life and philosophy had not better try to include the universe as given; whether the monster might not become less monstrous in the warmth of familiarity. But the philosopher, like the poet, must be granted his assumptions. The weakness of Mr. Santayana's position lies in the fact that, since the values and traditions out of which the spiritual dwelling-place of civilization is built are not rooted in accessible and controllable realities, they are, of necessity, mere matters of opinion and controversy. This criticism is borne out by the controversial character of Mr. Santayana's later writings. Were his style of a less sovereign urbanity he would have moments of nagging and of downright peevishness. His ultimate appeal is to nothing more com-

pelling, however admirable, than his own temper and taste.

Mr. Santayana, who has written so nobly and persuasively of the reason, is largely governed by æsthetic perceptions of a certain sort. He fell in love with the spires of Oxford, with the clean, well-mannered youth of the British upper classes; he found tea in country houses a charming ceremony. Why should he not? But because these things soothed and pleased him he is convinced that the countrymen of Lord Fisher never entertained a conscious thought of war, conquest, coercion, and paints a picture of the character and policies of Britain that would make even Tories snort and Liberals grin. But "fair outward ways" are Mr. Santayana's intellectual undoing. He dislikes Germans because they write turgid philosophical prose and wear ill-cut clothes, Americans because they are not urbane and are over-eager, Jews because they gesticulate with their hands. He dislikes the Reformation; he dislikes liberalism so intensely that, in a brilliantly sophistical passage, he tries to identify the liberalism of John Stuart Mill with the idealism of Fichte. He wants to exonerate Mill, who was an Englishman and a stylist, at the expense of Fichte, who was neither.

It is by such means that Mr. Santayana seeks to build up the spiritual universe. It will not be, one suspects, a crowded one despite the eloquence of his invitation. His tastes and distastes create moments of noble passion. "My instinct is to go and stand under the Cross, with the monks and the crusaders, far away from these Jews and Protestants who adore the world and govern it." But this passage and its nobility live at the cost of a vast exclusion. Nowhere in Mr. Santayana's writings is there any consciousness of those who are neither monks and crusaders nor materialized worldlings. Has he never heard that the modern world is full of Protestants and Jews and Catholics who are far less concerned with the Cross than with Jesus of Nazareth, and who, under a hundred names and banners, seek to make life and the natural world comelier, juster, happier, especially for those who have "no fair outward ways," nor handsome traditions, nor æsthetic freedom, but who are simply the great majority of mankind?

No, as a philosophic commentator on human life as a whole Mr. Santayana need not be taken too seriously. As a writer of prose and a fashioner of aphorisms he can scarcely be taken seriously enough. These soliloquies have not, perhaps,

quite the splendor and marble glow of *The Life of Reason;* they contain passages and pages unmatched in contemporary English. "The blackest tragedy," he writes with magnificent truth, "is festive; the most pessimistic philosophy is an enthusiastic triumph of thought." His own philosophy, at its most arbitrary, is a consummate gesture and a triumph of ordered speech.

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD[1]

I

IT IS now eight years since Mr. Leonard published his first collection of verse, *The Vaunt of Man.* Despite a hundred touches of the directest realism and the sharp and homely sagacity of many lines, the majority of readers saw in those pages a scholar who made large use of the sonnet form, cherished many moods that had been historically esteemed noble and fit for verse, and often delayed expression until experience had been transmuted into the forms of a cultural tradition. Such an estimate did Mr. Leonard but little justice. It was not, however, an unnatural one to make. In the same year as *The Vaunt of Man* appeared *A Dome of Many Colored Glass;* in 1913 *General William Booth Enters Heaven;* in 1914 *North of Boston;* in 1915 *Spoon River Anthology;* in 1916 *Chicago Poems.* The spectacular revolution in American poetry thrust Mr. Leonard off the highway of

[1] *The Lynching Bee and Other Poems.* By William Ellery Leonard.

song. He was too bold for the academic taste; the rebels saw in him a beauty too ordered according to an order of art and thought which they rejected. Hence he was sparingly quoted in the anthologies and, as the eminent voices among an older generation which had praised him ceased gradually to command attention, he was left lonely beside his lakes and hills.

As far as the public knew, his creative impulse halted. He published new versions of Empedocles and Lucretius, a study of Socrates, learned and witty *prolegomena* to a projected rendering of "Beowulf." With the world of readers these works helped him little. Nor did they help him greatly with the university which he serves and so obviously adorns. The academicians continued often to regard him with a cold and frugal eye. For they saw in him not only the scholar who had so fruitfully loitered beside Alp and Apennine; they saw in him the poet and prophet, the unquenchable sayer—always against the delusion of the day, always for the truth that should prevail, wrong today but right eternally, content, like his forebears on stony New England farmsteads, with little, but never content with less than freedom.

In Mr. Leonard's new volume, *The Lynching*

Bee and Other Poems, the scholar in him has withdrawn into the background. There is not a touch here of the Virgilian elegance and tenderness that marked so many of his earlier verses. All traditional harmonies and images have been discarded. These poems are like eagles on sunset crags and their plumage is ruffled by the storm. The verse is homely and often gaunt, written, except in rare moments of recollection and conscious synthesis, in a stinging American vernacular; there is no adornment and no eloquence; irony, indignation, and vision are stripped bare and speak in their immediate characters. The subjects are the overwhelming ones that exercise everywhere the spirits of free men: "The Lynching Bee," "A Wartime Movie," "The Heretics," "The Old Agitator," "The Mountain of Skulls." Here is not literature; here life itself speaks. Yet there is a profound difference between Mr. Leonard and his contemporaries. He clings to the concrete, but he never lets it master him. He is not content with a series of bright, exact images or of dark heroic-looking outlines, however sharp and jagged, or with isolated perceptions, however keen and close. He clasps the world so tight that it wounds him, but he does so in order to compel it to give up its

meaning. He can chant with the folk like Vachel Lindsay and convey the multiplicity of things as astonishingly as Carl Sandburg. But he neither creates myth nor is content with chaos. Immanent within these poems of his on the issues and in the speech of a perishable day is the vigilant and philosophic mind exercising its prophetic hardihood of thought, the historic imagination, the vision that transcends even while it records. "The Lynching Bee" is one of the boldest poems in the world. It conquers for literature a new series of details and images. But Mr. Leonard is not awed by his own mode of expression. At the core of the poem glows the sovereignty of thought; the tortured negro and the dead child's mother suddenly become symbols of immemorial rites of blood-sacrifice and vicarious atonement and the transference of pain and guilt. The terrible contemporaneousness of the scene and the arraignment merge into a wider interpretation of the piteous effort of men to free themselves from agony by inflicting it on others. Always in these poems there arises from the harsh chaos of earth an intellectual beauty that vindicates the nobler possibilities of the mind.

We have said that in this volume the scholar in

Mr. Leonard has withdrawn into the background. But he is massively visible there. Behind the bitter gaiety of "A Wartime Movie," the craggy ruggedness of "Tom Mooney," the ache of silent horror in "The Heretics," there is an intellectual passion free of the transitory, there is a constant and sustained elevation of spirit. Now we have almost learned to confound what the older critics called elevation of mind or spirit with safe opinions and the avoidance of humble and concrete circumstances. We are hag-ridden by the lesser Victorians and forget that both Milton and Shelley were scholars and rebels, too, philosophers and yet of the eternal company of prophets and outcasts. In this mood we accept poets who can have no essential elevation of spirit because they never seek to interpret the totality of the things that they have learned to see with so peering and exact a glance. Their gifts are many and admirable. But they do not know enough and have not enough intellectual power. That is why we have only minor poets. But that is also why Mr. Leonard has a strong chance of rising above that rank. None has surpassed him in seeing the visible world and the things that fill it; none has equaled him in

thinking about those things largely and nobly and under some aspect of eternity.

II

To his interesting version of the fragments of Empedocles and his majestic rendering of the "De Rerum Natura" of Lucretius Mr. Leonard now adds a translation of the earliest of Germanic epics. Guided by principles which he has explained in a learned and witty monograph, he has used in this translation the couplet—not the quatrain, be it observed—of the "Nibelungenlied." To anyone acquainted both with the Old English text and with the various modern translations in prose and verse, in English and German, it will at once be clear that Mr. Leonard withdraws "Beowulf" from archæology and blends it with living literature. I am sorry that he has used a number of obsolete and obsolescent words. The range of his scholarship and a certain intellectual isolation betray him, in both his translations and his original work, into this fortunately remediable error. It is his only one. The rhythmic energy and poetic aliveness of his verse cause his "Beowulf" to sweep on like a strong wind that brings

to us unimpaired the clash and stern splendor of that melancholy but heroic world and story from the tale of the fathers of Hrothgar to that moment when "the Geatish clansmen"

> bemoaned their dearth
> The passing-forth of Beowulf, these comrades of his hearth
> Calling him a world king, the mildest under crown,
> And to his kin the kindest, and keenest for renown.

To his mastery of the worlds of classical and Germanic antiquity Mr. Leonard has, through long residence in Wisconsin and through investigations growing out of his editing of Parkman's "Oregon Trail," added a scholarly and imaginative grasp of Indian lore and of our own pioneer period. This grasp has enabled him in "Red Bird" to make a contribution of real charm, authenticity, and quiet power to American dramatic literature. The general conflict that is basic to the drama is concentrated in the two opposing and yet so profoundly allied characters of Major Whistler and Red Bird. Each is a man of honor according to his own standards, each strives and fails to be less the tribesman and more the man, and so both, guiltless of themselves, contribute to the long tale of human error and crime. Deep-rooted as the play is in concrete incident, character and folkways, it rises by implica-

tion above its specific time and place and theme. "When the Long-Knives come and slay the Indians, they call it a victory; when the Indians come and slay the Long-Knives, they call it a massacre." In those words of the Indian chief the deeper theme of the play is indicated. We have few dramatic works so well founded, so well wrought, so homely and heroic at once as this and I have no doubt that it will, sooner or later, reach the stage.

Yet despite the interest and excellence of these various works many lovers of poetry will resent a little the drain upon Mr. Leonard's real business which they represent. And these lovers of our poetry will especially regret that Mr. Leonard's chief work has been, for so long, only a matter of rumor and report and, though printed at last, is only "privately" printed, "as manuscript," and thus meticulously guarded from the public. It offers an amusing commentary on human life that the chief work of an eminent poet must be kept hidden, in spite of the fact that the creative energy of the poet has lifted and translated all concrete experience into the eternal and intelligible world of the universal and enduring, for fear of the idle gossips on the streets of a small town.

The poem in question, as is known to not a few

people is "Two Lives."[1] It solves the chief problem of the age: the recounting of the exact fates of modern men and women in terms at once analytic and creative, epical and lyrical, precise and yet heroic. Two other poets before Leonard solved that problem: George Meredith, long ago, in "Modern Love"; Richard Dehmel, more recently, in "Zwei Menschen." To these masterpieces in a specially important and stirring kind, America has now added a third.

Mr. Leonard uses the sonnet as a stanza. He has thus far more speed than Meredith could get out of his caudated sonnets; he has more definite surge and roll than Dehmel wrung out of his occasionally intricate lyrical measures. He has dared to be far more faithful to the humble facts of life than Meredith; he has a clearer if not a deeper philosophic vision than Dehmel. His story, as such, is less subtle than the story of either of his predecessors and it has the weakness of being disastrous rather than tragic. But what counts in a work of this kind is less the story than the implicit poetic and philosophic comment on the story, the sweep and passion of the verse, the treatment of

[1] "Two Lives" was finally published in 1925 and at once raised Leonard into the front rank of living poets.

landscape as part of the homely or homeless universe, the final towering of the story into the universal world of significant human fate. "Two Lives" meets all these tests; it meets them not only adequately, but superbly.

It will be a service to the poem as well as to those who care for high poetry to quote two more or less representative stanzas, one illustrating the poem on its side of the creative analysis of actual fact and character, the other on its side of impassioned and heroic reflection. The lover in the story hears dreadful rumors concerning the past of his beloved.

> Now each new warning died with its first voice,
> A phantom, a shrill echo, slain at birth
> Upon the threshold of the House of Mirth:
> For warnings came, but yet there was no choice;
> No choice forevermore! New warnings came,
> But came too late. Her dear sweet random ways
> Would more and more reveal their tragic phase—
> As of a candle with unsteady flame
> Through fierce combustion of uncouth element—
> Proving that love itself, though it can put
> Light in the eyeball, swiftness in the foot,
> Cannot restring within its choral tent
> The mind 'twould play on, as a lyre or lute,
> When God has tampered with the instrument.

That lover, then, could not stoop to prudence nor, being human, wholly conquer misgiving. Pity and nobility and love made all calm weighing of issues impossible. Whence, then, came the choice and the decision? Mr. Leonard answers that question in a stanza which marks one of the loftiest points of his own and of our national poetry:

> We act in crises not as one who dons
> A judge's robe and sits to praise or blame
> With walnut gavel, before high window-frame,
> Beside a Justice-and-her-scales in bronze;
> We act in crises not by pros and cons
> Of volumes in brown calfskin still the same;
> But, like the birds and beasts from which we came,
> By the long trend of character—the *fons*
> *Fons et origo*—fountain-head and source—
> Of deeper conduct, whether in unleashed hound,
> That tears the fleeing stag unto the ground,
> Or thrush in battle for its fledgling's corse,
> Or boy who sees a cracked dam, hears a sound,
> And down the peopled valley spurs his horse.

AMERICAN MEMORIES

I

IT MUST have been around the turn of the century. A committee of gentlemen in Charleston determined to commemorate worthily the Carolinian poet Henry Timrod. It was an action that showed an emergence from the lowest depth of prejudice. For there were not wanting (such would have been the Charleston phraseology then) those who remembered that the poet's father, himself a writer of verse, was a German carpenter—or was it a cobbler?—and that an even more dreadful suspicion clung to the blood of the poor, dead poet's wife. The Charleston gentlemen had, of course, every reason to be satisfied with the poet's actual work. Like all propitiatory assimilationists he outdid himself in the defense of the institutions and ways that were not his. He glorified in sonorous enough verses the economic system of the Southern gentry and in his war poems called the Yankees "Huns." . . . It is a good word. It rhymes with "guns."

How far were such thoughts from the little crowd that gathered in Washington Park on an enchanting day of spring in order to be present at the unveiling of the bust of Timrod. I was sixteen or seventeen and my heart throbbed. I was in the presence of glory. I was in the presence of immortality. Oh, that (*utinam*—how the old phrases stick!) I might ever take a more active part some day in a ceremony so noble, so thrilling, so close to all that my young heart desired. I stood quite near the little platform that had been raised, and gazed with admiration and a gentle envy at the gentlemen of the committee and at the orator and poet of the day—Mr. Thomas della Torre and Mr. Henry Austin. Mr. Austin was a New York journalist who had written an article—I know neither where nor when—which had revived the memory of the South Carolinian poet. He had been invited to deliver an ode on this occasion. He was a tall man with a glossy black beard and blue eyes that looked half drunken. His frock-coat was extraordinarily long and heavy. Was it not called a Prince Albert then? He delivered the shapely stanzas of his ode with a great passion for the form of it, booming out the heavy six-syllabled lines with which he ended his stanzas of otherwise

decasyllabic verses. I can hear him: "Tu-*tum*, tu-TUM, tu-TUM!" The ode seemed to me to have eloquence, dignity, splendor. It probably had a shadow of all those qualities in a purely rhetorical sense. But that is what, especially in Charleston, we meant by poetry then—the handsome presentation—handsome as Austin's beard and eyes and coat—of such sentiments as would normally cause the heart of a reverent, patriotic, honorable gentleman to swell. Not a bad theory of poetry on the assumption (a tall one) that the world is what a Charleston gentleman of that day believed it to be.

I admired Mr. Austin and his ode. I admired even more and with more reason Mr. della Torre and his oration. Mr. della Torre is the admirable and beloved professor of Latin whom I have described in *Up Stream*. He took a higher and more philosophical tone than Austin. He made the point that any land that had produced a true poet was—I recall the very words—"allied forever with the great motherlands of song: with Greece, with Italy, with England." And yet in those words, too, and in the very rise and fall of their rhythm, there is the same conception still of poetry as rhetoric, as adornment, as at the most an agree-

able confirmation of the emotional conventions of a rigid and definite ruling class. Poetry heightens genteel love and inspires warlike valor and enhances victory and softens defeat and fires youth and consoles old age by the melodious maxims and reflections proper to each period. And Mr. della Torre quoted from Timrod's "Ode on the Confederate Dead":

> Stoop, Angels, hither from the skies.
> There is no holier spot of ground
> Than where defeated valor lies
> By mourning beauty crowned.

We were all moved. I most of all. What a comfortable psychical world that was to live in under that blue sky, in that fragrant air. And how easy it was to hope to be a poet and to write verses. The forms were fixed and the sentiments all predetermined. What you needed to do was to achieve, within the given forms and moods, some freshness and felicity, to add to the natural and inherent beauty of your verse and sentiment an element of charm.

Non satis est pulchra esse poemata: dulcia sunto! "It is not enough that poems be beautiful; they must have *charm.*" This was Mr. della Torre's personal and fitting interpretation of the Horatian

line. Tennyson was the grand example of a poet who constantly added charm to the natural beauty of sonorous forms and noble thoughts. Bolder spirits loved Browning. But he was too heady and too intricate for most. Two learned and intrepid spirits read Meredith with a half-fearful absorption. Revolutionary youngsters at college swore by Stevenson. He was the boldest blade among all the men of the dying century. . . .

Our living poet was the late George Herbert Sass. Late in his own life the Putnams brought out his collected verses, *The Poems of Barton Grey*. Sass was a tall, elegant, repressed personality. He hardly dared face his own bolder thoughts. Himself of German descent, he had married into the inner circles of the Charleston aristocracy. In the veins of his gifted son there is German and, in all likelihood, Marranos blood. But over son as over father broods the hush of old-fashioned Southern seemliness. I think that Sass was a much better poet potentially than he ever dared to be. What he actually wrote were pastiches of Tennyson and Browning and sometimes Arnold. He wrote a charming elegy on Lee and a dignified epitaph for the Confederate dead:

> And now the land they spent their lives to save
> Returns them all it has to give—a grave.

But what could one expect? Dear Yates Snowden, antiquary, poet, scholar, used to tell the most amazing anecdotes of Simms and of the old Carolinian gentry and in the same breath and with equal sincerity utter the sentiments of a schoolgirl. No one would let in either air or light. Everyone was seemly and noble and loyal. Gustavus Pinckney —note the historic name—published an opus on Calhoun defending nullification and the rights of the States. Not as a modern political or cultural pluralist. But as an unreconstructed Confederate. . . .

I do not suppose that in any age or country the division between literature and life was ever more complete. And what was true of South Carolina was true of the country at large. The Gilders and Stoddards and Johnsons and Mabies were all rhetoricians pure and simple: their business was to adorn the accepted and agreed upon and unexamined with the graces of literature. In every other country protestant voices had already arisen against the mean proprieties of popular mid-nineteenth-century literature. In America that type of writing reached both its lowest depth and its

highest triumph. Thoreau was forgotten and Whitman not yet thought upon. And in my mind that Charleston sky and air and water are forever connected with smooth sentiments and sonorous verses. And one reason, I know, why I have long ceased expressing myself in verse is that the pounding of those waves became in my adolescence commingled in my blood with the rhythms of an outworn music. The gentle, dignified rhetoricians of my boyhood will not let me go. I must be content with prose. . . .

II

Prose and veracity came stalking in; they came, very properly, from the Middle West. The East was hopelessly cultured and colonial. Rude men, men lacking in the traditional polish of the Anglo-American gentleman, made their appearance. Their rudeness, their un-English names, the very solecisms and barbarisms of their style, were like rain on parched earth. All was dust. Youths like myself who adored style and finish and form, and understood them too, were willing, for the hour, the day, the year, to have them forgotten, to have them trampled on. The time would come when

form could be again married to vigor and beauty need no longer be estranged from veracity. And quietly I hoped that this reunion would be in the days of my maturity my special contribution to the literature of my country and my period. . . . But in 1907 anything that was not rosewater tasted sweet upon the tongue. . . .

It was in the offices of B. W. Dodge & Company that, like a symbol of the life and literature to come, Dreiser first appeared on my horizon. He had on an elegant overcoat with a curved-in waist line. It didn't suit him at all and represented his romantic yearning for brownstone fronts and plush furniture and chandeliers full of prisms. The great rude man who was to renew American literature had romanticized the trimmings of the 'nineties. It was from his own depths that he had written those words in *Sister Carrie* that sounded so amusingly like a line of Pope, "Who would not dream upon a gilded chair?" Not only did he wear that preposterous overcoat; he still went out on Sunday mornings in a Prince Albert and a silk hat. He had an apartment somewhere near Morningside Park. In this matter of the apartment uptown and the Sunday-morning walks an alien influence may have wrought upon him. Consid-

erations of business may also have entered at this particular period. But that chapter in his life was even then running down. Ben Dodge, an intelligent, hearty, generous, bearded fellow, with a slightly rowdy flavor of an older America about him, was fast drinking himself to death. Another partner of the firm—canny, suburban, church-going—was transferring his interests. The last act of the Stuyvesant Press (founded in connection with B. W. Dodge) was to print Harris Merton Lyon's *Sardonics*. The whole undertaking collapsed. Dreiser turned elsewhither. I believe that he bought an interest in the *Bohemian Magazine*. Then, except for occasional letters, we lost sight of each other.

We forgathered again several years later. He had assumed his right and permanent character and attitude. He loomed in a Greenwich Village apartment. Gone were the trappings of the last pangs of youthful yearning. He drank little and did not smoke at all. He spoke with a somber, ironic joy of his now thoroughly established reactions to literature and civilization. His explanation of all the phenomena of life in crude biochemical terms had, philosophically considered,

something childlike about it. What impressed one was the vast, brooding, sorrowful, compassionate vision of life that chose to express itself thus. From this jeering and sometimes ribald talk there came to me the pity in his large heart out of which he had created his incomparable old men: Gerhardt, the old Irish politician in *The Financier*, the tragic Jewish father in *The Hand of the Potter*. Paintings in the latest grotesque fashion hung on his wall on Tenth Street. These paintings may have been a substitute for the gilded chair of other years. Out of his starved youth there remained a longing which had once been fixed upon "mansions"; now it was fixed on sophistication. It did not, luckily, soften his tread or alter his direction. He crashed on. . . .

Nothing could alter him, nothing affect him. That was his great strength. I cared more for the rhetorical properties of letters then than I do now. Dreiser knew how much I admired him. And so he took it very kindly, though a little wonderingly, when I pointed out to him that "betimes" doesn't mean sometimes, that it was ghastly to sprinkle a page with such phrases as "no less" or "of sorts," ghastly to call anything from a building to an or-

chard an "affair" and that "amble" and several other favorite words of his didn't mean what he thought they did.

We used to meet at the Kloster Glocke (later to be called the Convent Bell) on Fourth Avenue. Dreiser ate a certain fish food there with unvarying relish. The beer was memorable and one of the waiters a chap who affected an acquaintance with arts and served us with gusto. To our favorite table Dreiser brought a story he had just finished. I went over it with him, confining my criticisms and corrections to purely formal matters. He was extremely good-humored and really docile about it all. When the story appeared, I found all my corrections embodied in the text. But Dreiser had been busy making corrections, too. For every barbarism I had eliminated, two had slipped in. I knew then that it mattered little. Now I know that, in the deeper sense, it matters not at all. Nor has it, I think, been sufficiently emphasized in all the public twaddling about Dreiser's bad writing that he does not always write badly even on the purely formal side. He is simply insensitive and uncritical on that side. Yet in the very story we discussed at the Kloster Glocke

there appears suddenly amid masses of particularly awkward prose this: "Simple natures that fasten themselves like lichens on the stones of circumstance and weather their days to a crumbling conclusion." How Sir Thomas Browne would have loved that "weather their days to a crumbling conclusion." Dreiser probably doesn't see the difference between that and certain other sentences on the same page. But I single it out, amid many others, as a warning to the glib elegants who declare unqualifiedly that Dreiser cannot write.

The result of these various talks and conferences was that Dreiser asked me to write a little book about him. *The Genius* had been withdrawn from circulation. His fundamental work was in hand. I do not know whether the late Stuart Sherman had already formulated his theory of the "animal behavior" of Dreiser's characters. But the time was ripe for a biographical and critical interpretation. In any continental country this would have been seen. But in America there still prevailed the silly notion that only the dead are worth discussing. Publishers looked coldly upon our plan, which was consequently abandoned.

Of many subsequent meetings two stand out in

my memory as significant of the new world that was being built up within America by a group of curious, fearless and impassioned spirits. Dreiser asked a number of men to come to his apartment to discuss the publication of an annual which was to illustrate the new literature as well as the new art. His place was lit by candles and the shadows were heavy. Detaching themselves from them, I remember especially the forms of Robert Henri and George Bellows. Henri was rather elegiac about the project; Bellows was blasphemously enthusiastic. He had both heat and light. Literature cannot have been very heavily represented. Mencken was absent and I remember being irritated by George Nathan's glossy and purring detachment. The powerful natures in literature are always propagandists on one side. Dreiser really wanted the plan to come to something. He was really more concerned over the new art than over his special contribution to it. But the meeting scattered without coming to any practical conclusions and of the whole project no more was heard.

The second meeting took place during the most depressing period of the war. Dreiser and I had had luncheon alone together in a little Italian

restaurant downtown. We walked toward his house in a flurry of early snow. He lifted his cane toward the sky with an unusual passion and denounced the blood and hypocrisy and tyranny of the war and derived these things rightly from certain ethical concepts which he declared to be the historic flails and scourges of the race. His grim and reasoned denunciation heartened me. His agreement with my sentiments and opinions gave me an assurance of the hope that it might be possible to build a decenter world than the old world of patriotism and repression and conformity to powers that might at any moment give the command of murder of both the body and the soul. Standing there in the snow with Dreiser, I remembered Charleston and the smiling sentiments of its gentry and its literature. We were seeing what such sentiments and such writing come to. We were seeing that the new literature was more than a matter of form or fashion or technique. It was the most vital of the forces that could save an otherwise ruined world. I left Dreiser still heavily gesticulating in his condemnation of the evil that was darkening the sun. I was more than ever convinced that he was not only a great writer, but a good man and a lover of his kind.

III

I was teaching (*vide Up Stream*) at the Harley School. It was early in the morning and the air in the rooms and halls was not yet jaded and exhausted. Bells began to ring, feet scurried, unruly voices sang out. The news had reached the building. The armistice had been signed. The war was over. The boys gave whoops and clattered down the cement stairs. Their faces shone with satisfaction. Not that they had ever doubted who would win the war, or who was 100 per cent in the right. They. Each. Their team, of course. Their clan. I could visualize more or less a German school. People, as such, no doubt average up much alike. But in the world of spiritual values victory is defeat, defeat victory. You had only to look at the faces of the boys to see that. They were young, of course; they might outgrow this moment. But it was questionable and would take long. The moment was so wholly an evil one.

Slowly I followed them downstairs. I came upon the head-master. Yes, we were dismissing the boys for the day, of course. But his face didn't shine. He turned his narrow head with the thin well-sleeked hair slowly toward me. His

thin-lipped bitterish mouth under the clipped little mustache was paler and more compressed than usual. (A youngish Christian gentleman, unmarried, living with his mother, about to rise from his position here to the post of employment director of a very Christian dry-goods house.) He shook his head. "I'm disappointed. When you consider the atrocities those people have been guilty of—why, the Allies should march into the country and destroy it and dig up the very fields." I nodded. His vicarious raping-party was over. I understood. Here was a corruption of war deeper even than that of victory. Professing evangelical Christians were especially prone to it.

The day, it will be remembered, was a rather brilliant one in New York. But the sunshine seemed drained and empty. Heaven knows I was glad the war was over. But the joy of the people in the streets was a thing so alien to me—the joy of physical triumph, of being sure that you can hurt your adversaries and make them suffer, the joy of your knee on the other fellow's chest. Never did men seem so like Yahoos to me as in that hour.

The subway trains were crowded. I had a long ride ahead of me and was glad to drop into a seat.

Immediately my eyes fell upon a man straight opposite to me. A fat, hairy man, a workingman, wedged in between two office girls. His soft, stained felt hat had been twisted into a sharp point. His long, untrimmed mustache bristled and yet drooped. The large blue eyes looked wonderingly and yet woundedly out from the folds of flesh. He wriggled a little. He drew himself up in a queer way. Tears began to roll out of those hurt, those wounded eyes. He breathed heavily. Oh yes, he was drunk. He lifted himself a little again. His hoarse voice rose. "I'm an American, you c'n chust betcherlife. Lossa son in de war. Lossa son . . . 'merican!" He leaned forward. The eyes grew dreamy. He didn't see the train or the people. What did he see? He hummed to himself:

> Die Bliemelein im Felde
> Die bliehn doch so sheen, so scheen. . . .

An intelligent, kindly young Jew beside me leaned forward and spoke warningly in Yiddish, "Nicht Deitsch!" The fat man drew himself up. He took a bottle out of his hip pocket. He put it to his lips. He stopped drinking suddenly and half arose. Now his eyes had a hunted look. "Who

say I ain't a 'merican. Lossa son. Yeh!" He stood there swaying with the motion of the car; he tried to keep his balance, but writhing, as he was, in the grip of an unbearable pain, he collapsed between the two office girls. He hung his head forward; the pointed hat nearly slipped off. From under the shadow of it came a sobbing murmur: "Die Bliemelein im Felde. . . ."

I thought of Charleston. And of this man's dead son. "Stoop, angels, hither from the skies." The same old deadly lies were torturing the world. The same old handsome murderous lies. The new world, Dreiser's and mine? Would it ever rise? We could work for it, strive after it, even though without hope.

AMERICA IN EUROPE

LEGENDS have gathered about America in Europe. Like all legends, they express the wishes of the believer rather than the character of the subject. The impoverished middle classes tell each other the story that every American workingman drives his own car; liberals hard-pressed between the dictatorship of the right and the left dream of the valiant democracy overseas; the communists read Upton Sinclair and include the United States in the territories of the White Terror; the pre-war intellectual, hearing the jazz of the profiteers, pursued by radio into his very study, curses the Americanization of the world.

America is romance; America is refuge; America is self-justification. The legends are drawn from the accounts of European travelers, from the stories of Jack London and of Sinclair Lewis. The America of romance is refuge from a sordid here and now; the America of *Babbitt* is a source of self-justification.

No one is quite free of the influence of these legends. But in central Europe there is a minor-

ity that is not contented with them, that gazes wistfully to America as to a source of some new impulse toward a clearer and more beautiful way of life. This minority asks for news, news from another land of the spirit, asks for books, for poems —"*Are* there poets in America?"—for, alas! philosophies. It asks, as central Europe, still in this respect very close to the heart of life, always does, for the name and way of salvation.

One finds it enormously difficult to answer these questioners. For suddenly doubts strike upon them whether this seeking of theirs has an intelligible goal. "Karolyi, the mildest of constitutional liberals, has been forbidden to speak in America!" I find myself, curiously enough, defending America even in regard to this shameful incident by pointing out to my astonished friends that precisely in America the political life is completely alienated from the intellectual life of the country, that the two function quite separately, that the American thinker or artist regards these governmental performances with amused indifference or aloof indignation. "We," I discover myself suddenly saying, "are concerned with *Kultur*. Upon the whole, the government leaves us alone except to collect the income tax; we try to forget it after

March." I point to *These United States*, to *Our Changing Morality*, and ask my friends to note the almost complete absence of both economic and political preoccupation.

They do not quite see what we are after. Some of the liberties we are fighting for—small, seemly liberties toward leading a decent personal life—they have never lost. Even in Poland and Hungary there is neither a Mann Act nor a Volstead Act. There are worse things, equally stupid, inconceivably more cruel. But not these. They do see, these extraordinarily intelligent questioners, that the whole of our new American literature is one of essential criticism, irony, revolt, that it is, in brief, what they call "activist" throughout. They ask for a trend and a goal and a meaning.

I find myself reading a good many American books as they come my way: the *Second Spoon River Anthology*, Sherwood Anderson's *A Story Teller's Story*, *Arrowsmith*, Carl Van Vechten's *The Tattooed Countess*, Walter F. White's *The Fire in the Flint*, *The Spring Flight* by Lee J. Smits, Laurence Stallings' *Plumes*. I find myself, in addition, reflecting upon the development of the American drama which I watched so closely for a number of years. The plays that stand out in

my memory are not only those of O'Neill or of the admirable Susan Glaspell, but isolated works by Arthur Richman, Lewis Beach, Leon Cunningham, Gilbert Emery, Jack Lawson, Kaufmann and Connelly, George Kelly. . . . Books and plays and poems, often homespun in texture and faltering in technique, rarely brilliant or eloquent or scrupulously wrought, have a common aim: their authors burn with a common ardor—to break up the mechanical, imitative mass life, to liberate the individual, to urge American men and women to live by their taste and their intelligence, not by their prejudices and their tribal passions. The methods of our writers differ. There is the obliterating tread of Dreiser, the half-dumb searching of Anderson, the laconic incisiveness of Masters, the magnificently sure and agile sword-play of Sinclair Lewis. Among the minors one finds a good deal of merely honest realistic plodding. I am thinking of such books as Henry Aikens's *Zell.* Nor should I forget the imitators of the European expressionists, Waldo Frank and the gifted Evelyn Scott. But it is unimportant to pile up names or titles. In the perspective of distance and absence there remains no doubt in regard to the quite homogeneous character of our newer

American literature. Even as the Russian literature of the nineteenth century was, beneath and beyond everything else, a literature of political revolt, so our new American literature is one of cultural and moral revolt—a libertarian literature in the broadest sense, urging, imploring, castigating man to live by the monitions of his disciplined soul, not by the dark impulses of his tribal passions.

* * * * *

Dimly the cultured Continental feels this. He asks for more American books. One points them out to him. He reads them and is a little disappointed. He misses *nuances;* he asks for finer discriminations. That impression of him sums up his need of us and explains his unconscious yearning. He is enmeshed in *nuances;* he is paralyzed by his discriminations. A strange mysticism is in his bones. A strange virus of authority has entered the stream of his blood. He condemns unconditionally the bloody dictatorships that now spread from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. He condemns them. Yet he cannot quite liberate himself from the philosophies on which they are based. And he wants, above most things, an ordered philosophy. He can understand the Fascisti;

he can understand the French royalists. He can understand so much that, if he is a Jew, which is frequently the case, he can understand Dühering and the philosophical anti-Semite. If you say to him: All this talk is rubbish and poisonous rubbish, he feels a moment of inner liberation, next hesitates because you have missed all the *nuances*, then sinks back into his philosophically saturated despair. Yet he did have that moment of liberation. And that moment symbolizes his recurrent yearning for America, his pathetic interest in American books, scenes, customs, ideas. He knows that we are crude. He feels that in that very crudity there is something he misses, something supremely tonic and healing.

* * * * *

Romanticism has been his undoing—romanticism that discovered the epics, the myths, the songs of the various nationalities, that, in fact, discovered those very nationalities, next identified them with race, next with certain territories, next with power and dominance. The Poles are trying to crush White Russians and Ruthenians, the Czechs and Jugo-Slavs Germans, the Hungarians and Italians even the mildest forms of political dissent. The

Continent is sodden with romanticism, with a false and virulent historical-mindedness. The young French generation repudiates Anatole France and regards Voltaire as a shallow nuisance; the younger Germans resuscitate the romantic writers and talk about the destructive acidlike analysis of the Jewish mind. In the youth movements the leaders of the extreme right and the extreme left understand each other well. Both believe in discipline, loyalty, order, ideologies like steel traps. Everyone is "religious" in a strange way that combines belligerent heathenishness with pseudo-Christian romanticism. The few remaining liberals protest in the name of liberty. But they are contaminated by the rancid philosophies of nationalism and loyalty and order. They flirt with America. They suspect that they are sick in mind. They suspect that from the West there is blowing a free and cleansing wind. . . .

Of course the infection is spreading. There are Chesterton and Belloc in England; there are the Americans who begin to take the tone of mystical Nordics and, in their comparative innocence, are trying to drag into our midst the romanticism of race myths and hate and blood. But they *are* still comparatively innocent. A brief residence in

Poland would, for instance, really re-ally my friend Mrs. Austin with the true American tradition of liberty and racial equality—with Thoreau and Whitman. . . . Meanwhile our new literature is uncontaminated. It is the freest, most rational, most humane and, in the highest sense, decent literary movement now active in the world. It is uninhibited by the blood and hatred of what goes under the name of history; it is unacquainted with the more dangerous romantic influences. It has a dash of the eighteenth century at its best—a dash of the human vitality of Fielding, of the supreme and supremely precious good sense of Hume. Even when our writers use the technique of the expressionists, as Elmer Rice did, for instance, in *The Adding Machine*, their intellectual intention is still the same clean and worthy one—to break down superstition and mass-mindedness, to aim a blow for liberty which is also peace.

* * * * *

It is in some such fashion that I try to explain to my liberal friends in Europe their wistfulness about America. There are enough mad things in America, I grant them. There are Ku-Klux Klaners, quite like their own *Hakenkreuzler;*

there are the ultra-academic critics who think they are opposing romanticism and are, however unconsciously, in league with its most evil consequences; there are, I admit not without a shudder, people in prison for their political or economic opinions. But, I can conscientiously add, the spirit of Whitman is not dead. It is, in truth, more alive than ever. The best and most influential of our newer writers, men who in profoundest reality are helping to mold the future of America, know nothing of history or nationalistic romance in the European sense and plead for reason, for tolerance, for liberty. Once the oppressed of the world could come to us. The sinister infection of romantic nationalism has stopped that. But the oppressed in mind can come to us today—to those of us who, almost alone in the world, have not lost touch with the half-forgotten spirit of reason and of freedom.

This is what, dimly enough, many cultured Europeans suspect. American books are being read; American books are being translated. A wind of healing blows from the West. . . .

Part Three: Germans

RICHARD DEHMEL

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEATH

OBSCURE paragraphs in our daily press announced the fact that on Tuesday, February 10, Richard Dehmel died in Berlin shortly before completing his fifty-seventh year. It is not strange that to the vast majority of men the cabled words meant nothing. How many, even among the technically lettered, habitually read lyrical and philosophical poetry in a tongue not their own? The reputation of Dehmel was just beginning to shimmer beyond the boundaries of his own country when the World War effectually darkened it once more. That was no cause for any inconsolable regret. Richard Dehmel was a poet who could afford to wait. But the message of his death brings to a few in every land a deep sense of desolation and impoverishment.

Nothing less than some communication of that sense is just to Dehmel. For he was more than a creator of beauty through lyrical speech and music, more than the literary discoverer of new percep-

tions and moods and images, more than a master of the rich and intricate devices of an art. He was a commanding personality; he lived his poems; he strove to be a creator in terms of life, and his written words are the record of that process. To the youth of his own country he was, for many years, not only singer, but master, not only poet, but guide. Not that he was ever the peculiar idol of cliques or coteries. Fame met him so early that he had no need of fashion. But wherever men and women had left behind them the moral nominalism of an enfeebled tradition, wherever their thought broke through the rigid boundaries of class or national consciousness, wherever, in a word, the living spirit of Goethe blended with a social consciousness that Goethe's age had not reached, there Dehmel was a power.

He called his first volume *Redemptions*. But the title, in truth, fits his whole work. He was a poet of liberation, of freedom, though in a sense ill understood among us. For he sought liberation not from but through life, and his ideal was the highest individualism tempered by the severest self-discipline. Yet he warned against a wrong interpretation of the latter word. To most men it means the disciplining away of the self, the sub-

stitution for it from without of a normalized, tribal or ethical type. To Dehmel it meant the creation out of all that is plastic within us of a self that shall be in harmony with the sum of its mastered but not discarded instincts, with nature, and with the free development of human society. And he was unlike Nietzsche, to whom his ideology has been compared, in this that he desired his ideal to be "in widest commonalty spread," today and here. Every son of man, as he says in the beautifully simple "Holy Night," is a son of God. The Annunciation and the Birth are daily miracles. It is the spirit alone which counts, and all that trammels and warps it must be broken down. Thence arises his sympathy with the workers and that whole group of poems in which, always as a creative seer, never as a propagandist, he ranged himself, long before these latter days, with the forces of social and economic change:

The evening sky turns sombre red,
And many poor men cry for bread.
  Grind, O mill, keep grinding.
The night's womb holds a storm within—
Tomorrow shall the task begin!
  Grind, O mill, keep grinding.
The storm shall sweep the fields of earth

Until no man cries out for dearth!
Grind, O mill, keep grinding!

The greater number of his poems which embody experiences more closely personal deal with love. For in love Dehmel saw the major instinct that must be clarified if it is to serve creative uses. His range of incident and imagery here is probably the widest that any poet has commanded. He starts with no preconceptions; he is afraid of nothing; he hides nothing. Love is the "turbid" element in life. To be guided and transformed, it must be grasped in its true nature. Roses and raptures alone will help us little. And with his highest lyrical ecstasy are fused elements of observation and of thought. Men and women do not love in a thin land of the pure emotions, but amid the edges of things and the thongs of circumstance. Hence all these poems, culminating in the cycle of narrative lyrics "Two Souls" ("Zwei Menschen"), are of an incomparable density of substance. The traditional abstractions and simplifications are swept away, no shred of mere literature is left, life is translated immediately into art. And here, too, in this turbid atmosphere of the most troubling of human passions he found no clarity for either woman or man save in a loyalty

to that very process of change which the inner monitor marks in the creative development of personality:

> Thus flaming my command stands fast:
> Dawn breaks whenever dusk is past!
> If true to that till death, at last
> Thou shalt wear the crown of the living:
> The creator's crown of the living!

His whole art, which was so rich and various an expression of his own pilgrimage on the road to that perfection which is also the highest self-fulfillment, he addressed to those in whom an equal or a comparable impulse was alive. And to find them he turned deliberately to the "broader masses of the people, because far more than those in power they serve in these days the creative will of life." It is they, too, who possess the "freedom and the joy of a truly human sympathy." For such "sympathy is found perfectly only in spirits to whom man's life is not a road toward mere well-being, worldly distinction, or worldly wisdom, but a steady and fundamental impulse toward a heightening of all creative powers." To that word "creative" Dehmel always returns. There is nothing rigid or finished in his universe. The spirit and the will shape the self and the world; their striv-

ing cleanses both of dross, and our creative struggle in today's sultry valleys shall free the peaks of the mountains for the shining of our children's feet (*Das Hohe Lied*).

In Dehmel's poetry, as in all living art, there is of course no division between form and substance. The creative process of expression is one; the form is an organic part of the expressed substance. With this warning, however, we can make the usual abstraction and fix our attention upon the poet's handling of his medium. Here he had, like other poets who use the German language, one initial advantage. The German classics came late and took from antiquity and from the Renaissance only what could serve the most personal uses. The liberating influence of the folk song was constant and pervasive. Thus free verse has never been the banner of a real revolution in letters. Arno Holz only continued, with minor innovations, the unbroken tradition of Goethe, Hölderlin, Novalis, Möricke, and Heine. Furthermore, there took place, in Dehmel's own time, what he himself called an extraordinary improvement in speech-craft.

He preferred, upon the whole, what we are now wont to call the fixed forms of verse. In the very

popular volume of one hundred poems selected by himself from his works, only fourteen are in free rhythms and only four hover on the borderland between free and fixed. Yet to call the form of the remaining eighty-two poems fixed is to invite misunderstanding. Every poem of Dehmel is rhythmically a new thing; the meter is the very music of that particular thought and passion. The divisions are not patterned stanzas, but stages in the creative development of the poem. The substance is never embodied in a metrical medium that had a definite previous existence. One cannot with truth say of Dehmel that he used the couplet or the ballad measure or the *ottava rima.* Each impulse toward expression created its own form and wrought out its own music. The range of that music is marvelous. There is the rich and sultry throb of the frankly erotic poems, such as "Erste Begierde" and "Aus banger Brust"; the repressed flute-tones of such poems of the tragic life as "Drückende Luft"; the swift abandon of "Im Spelunkenrevier"; the folk-song lilt of "Die stille Stadt"; the grave and quiet melody, as of verses in a miracle play, of "Mit heiligem Geist"; the stormy energy of the "Lied an meinen Sohn"; the organ-toned fullness of "Die Harfe."

The absence of hardened conventions in his native literature served him well in a more vital aspect of his work. He could at once deal creatively with modern life in its totality. No very strong feeling concerning what was fit or unfit for lyrical poetry stood in his way. He found few things unmentionable or poetically offensive by an anterior presumption. Hence he was spared any difficult struggle to find a new expression for new experiences. No antique moods or forms of speech stood between him and the objects of his vision. He could see and use them directly and transfer his inner life to the objective world of art by an imaginative appeal to actual and omnipresent things. A single, very simple example will suffice. There are the telegraph wires that sweep across all the earth. Francis Jammes has spoken of them in French:

> On voit, quand vient l'automne, aux fils télégraphiques
> De longues lignes d'hirondelles grelotter.

And he has done it beautifully. But there is a touch of the self-conscious in the studied simplicity of this speech and in the almost prosaic modulation of the rhythm. Centuries of "noble" diction hover in the shadows of the poet's mind.

Dehmel's lyrical spontaneity in the use of the actual is complete. He is forced into neither self-consciousness nor violence:

> Doch immer Du, dies dunkle Du,
> Und durch die Nacht dies hohle Sausen;
> die Telegraphendrähte brausen,
> ich schreite meiner Heimat zu.

This example must, of course, be indefinitely multiplied, and it must be broadened so as to include not only the things of the outer life, but all the strange and unheard-of stirrings in the intensely conscious soul of our age. It was for his immediate contemporaries that Richard Dehmel was able to clarify and interpret every pang of the heart and every vision of the mind. He is in the highest degree "actual." But the actuality of his verse is always touched with that ultimate beauty which is not of an age, and also, as in his deep and valiant "Drinking Song," with an abiding sense of those last mysteries which lie in wait even for those who, like himself, have not only created life, but transcended it:

> But one more hour, then comes the night;
> A bridge grows over the river wide.
> Hail! Oh, hail!
> It creaks beneath a horseman's might.

Saw ye yon sable horseman ride?
Hail! Thrice hail!
The song of life and death we still are singing!
Crash! A new glass! For upward we go winging
Above this life to which our lives are clinging!
Hail!

GERHART HAUPTMANN

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY

THE German Republic has made a symbol of the sixtieth birthday of Gerhart Hauptmann. Monarchists and reactionaries accepted the symbol and were as scurrilous as their hearts desired on the occasion of the Breslau festival, given in honor of this common man, social revolutionary, visionary, and friend of the friendless. Thus a literary occasion was turned into something very like a political crisis. It came upon the heels of that unspeakable thing, the murder of Walther Rathenau, and all nerves were dangerously on edge. To all liberals, to all free men, to the adherents of the republic even among the middle-of-the-road parties, there was a profound sense of healing in the event, in the tribute which the state paid to Gerhart Hauptmann. They did not all agree with the specific views of either his ardent youth or his more mystical later years; they did not think that all his works are impeccable masterpieces. They knew the man to be the serenest representative of

the purest spiritual forces in the modern life of their nation; they knew him to have been self-dedicated to goodness—not, of course, in the sense of a conventional patterning of his personal life, but to the goodness whose name is sympathy, compassion, justice, work, aspiration. They thought of his great figures, of his great defeated, his conquered conquerors, his eternally crucified: Florian Geyer, Michael Kramer, Heinrich von Aue, Rose Bernd, Montezuma. He was to them at this crisis in their history and fate more than a dramatist and a poet. He was *their* poet and prophet and spokesman.

All that concerns us comparatively little. If foreign judgment represents, as has been said, a kind of contemporaneous posterity, we ought to be able today to take a juster and more final view of Hauptmann and his work than his countrymen. But very curious forces stand in the way of our attaining such a judgment. The world of letters, like the more extensive worlds of politics and religion, is governed by furious preconceptions that have hardened into myths. And one of these myths is that no German can write. A patronizing incredulity meets me when I say that the prose of

Thomas Mann, as a mere artistic medium, is at least as fine as Joseph Conrad's or George Santayana's; when I assert that, as a master of speech and the music of speech, Rainer Maria Rilke stands above all living poets. One's friends are willing to accept Heine, who was brilliant and telling, but always fell just short of ultimate sincerity, beauty, power; they think it merely eccentric to say that a man named Theodor Storm left a handful of lyrics that belong with the quite supreme things in all literature, with the few brief, topmost songs of Sappho, and Catullus, and Campion. A well-known scholar, one of the best-loved men in American academic circles, a most elegant user of English, said to me years before the war in a tone of puzzled despair: "Why are things German always assumed to be below par in the spiritual markets of the world?"

I raise this general question not to be controversial, but to introduce the statement that Hauptmann is preëminent among living dramatists, first of all by virtue of the fact that he is a great master of language. I am not forgetting the Virgilian elegance of Schnitzler, the lucidity and precision of Galsworthy, the stripped, pedestrian eloquence

of Shaw. These things are on a lower plane. Hauptmann is a poet in both the German and the English sense, a master of both creative vision and of creative speech. He must, of course, like all writers, be taken at his best. The unrhymed trochaics in "Der weisse Heiland" are often strangely feeble. The dramatic blank verse of "The Sunken Bell," "Henry of Auë," even of "Charlemagne's Hostage," is obviously and easily beyond that written by any other modern dramatist. We speak of the return of verse to the stage, of a modern drama in the grand style. These questions do not exist in the German theater—the theater of Hauptmann.

His plays are known among us in translation, and since I am responsible for most of these translations I am the freer to say that they can be, at best, only betrayals of a subtle kind. Their soundest service can be but to lead readers to the original. There is, among many others, one passage of quite Shakespearean speed and power in "Henry of Auë":

> Life is a brittle vessel, O my friend,
> The Koran saith, and look ye, it is true.
> And I have learned this truth. I would not live
> In a blown egg's void shell.

I am not wholly displeased with these verses. But they smack too much of a Shakespearean imitation. They lose some of the speed of the original; they lose its concentration.

> Das Leben ist zerbrechliches Geräte,
> Mein Freund, sagt der Koran, und Sieh, dast ist's.
> Und dies hab' ich erkannt! Ich mag nicht wohnen
> In eines ausgeblasenen Eies Schale.

And then the speed and fury of that great despair mount and soar in a rhythmic structure that masters the music of the verse and yet subdues it utterly to dramatic uses straight to the naked simplicity of the climax:

> Sei Kaiser, Sultan, Papst! In Grabeslinnen
> Gewickelt bist du und ein nackter Leib,
> Heut oder morgen must du drinn' erkalten.

The verse of Hauptmann has other notes. It has the note of lyrical and mystical beauty, as in the angels' chorus in "Hannele"; it has the note of a large and joyous beauty:

> An Urgewalt dem Frühlingsdonner gleich;

it has the note of repressed irony, as in "The Bow of Odysseus":

> Was wird die Mutter sagen, Telemach,
> Dass ich ihr schönstes Spielzeng schon zerschlug?

It has still other notes. What I hope is that these brief, concrete examples will make it clearer than any long critical description that Hauptmann is, or has sought to be, a dramatist in what Arnold would have called the grand style, that we do not even approach him when we discuss his work—as has often been done—as the work of one modern dramatist among others—among, say, Hervieu, Brieux, or even Chekhov and Galsworthy.

From a temporary rather than a permanent point of view the prose of Hauptmann is more notable than the verse. Here, above all, the warning that translation is inadequate must be strongly sounded. When his prose dialogue first appeared it seemed to be most striking through its close and complete imitation of human speech. That was for years the current criticism. Yet so soon as we analyze the word imitation as here used we come upon the greatness of the creative work and vision. For human speech cannot, of course, be imitated. A creative compression and symbolization must take place, which leaves in its brevity the fullness, richness, convincingness, the complete individualization of life. In Hauptmann's prose plays his world speaks and is chronicled forever—chronicled with each man's and woman's temporal and perish-

able accent, chronicled with each human soul's permanent speech and voice. No art more concrete and more universal at the same time exists. In that mood and method which is called naturalism and always transcends the lower meaning—which is a perverse and impossible meaning—of the word Hauptmann's achievement is the supreme one today and likely to remain so.

The people who speak this concrete and yet universal speech are like their speech. In all but a few of the plays there are no minor characters. There is no First Citizen or Second Voice in Hauptmann. The latest comers in the drama, and on the Continent even in the novel, have ceased to hold this to be a virtue. They deal in voices and human symbols of forces. It would be a rash criticism to say that this movement is doomed to sterility, that expressionism can never be a form or mood of art "in widest commonalty spread" among the generations of men. It is not rash to assert that Hauptmann's creation of recognizable and enduring human creatures who people our world with the inevitableness of earth and trees and water derives a worth and a security from its continuance of a tradition in art which, common to Homer and Shakespeare, Molière and Goethe, Fielding and

Flaubert, has shown its conformity to man's nature and desires. We know these men and women of Hauptmann, we know the poor weavers and the Vockerats, Crampton and Mother Wolf, Hannele and Florian Geyer, Henry the Bell-Founder and his wife, Henschel and Hanne Schäl, Michael Kramer and his wife and his wonderful daughter and tragic son, the Prince of Aue, the poor peasant girl, Rose Bernd—we know these and dozens of others as we know Achilles, and Patroclus, and Diomedes, and Hamlet, and Shylock, and Falstaff.

It has been customary to discuss the problems of Hauptmann. Yet his plays are never problem plays in the narrower sense. His problems ask for no solution; he offers none; there is none. His people live within society; social and economic factors are powerfully there. But Hauptmann never stays within society. The social structure is itself before the judgment bar of man. He speaks for man—speaks for man as, in so different a superficial sense, his stringent Protestant ancestors would have spoken for him; for man alone was his God. Only today he sets in place of the concept God the inscrutable fate and character of men. He is indeed concerned for but one problem—the problem of pain. "Wherever there is suffering," the but

half-penitent British wit wrote, "there is holy ground." Oscar Wilde is a strange enough person from whose words to seek a motto for the works of Gerhart Hauptmann. Yet there is no better one. And it is these words that should be pondered by the critics—curious men who call themselves Christian—who continue year in and year out to call the plays of this man sordid and painful. To him there is nothing sordid that is human; the human cannot be sordid. Every man is a son of man; every son of man is crucified by pain—not by guilt, by pain! I am deliberately using this Christian phraseology not only because of its lasting symbolic significance, but because it is Hauptmann's own. He is, in "The Sunken Bell," in "Griechischer Frühling," a pagan. The life of art, of beauty, of the senses, is akin to him; it is his own. But he cannot be a pagan until the world is healed; he cannot be a pagan until the world is redeemed—not from sin, but from suffering. His plays all deal with that theme and that hope; how shall man be redeemed from his pain? Guilt is a fiction, sin a theological catchword; there are no villains. "Moral judgments are only ways of avoiding thought and understanding." There must be neither judge nor judgment. There can

be neither trials nor trial scenes except in an ironic sense. One thing only is on trial—the nature of things that makes man suffer. There is but one protagonist in a hundred shapes—Prometheus or Job, Henschel or Arnold Kramer, Henry of Aue or Montezuma—Man in Pain.

There remains the question of Hauptmann's dramaturgy. The whole question of the dramaturgy of the naturalistic theater has been discussed so often and, in the main, so fruitlessly, that I fear the dullness of futile repetition. It ought to be clear by this time that technique in the drama is inherent not so much in substance as in the philosophical treatment of substance, and that a dramatist to whom guilt is a shadow, society a remediable device, the universe a process and not a system, cannot and must not use the ingenious and arbitrary arrangement of the elements of life which, under the common name of clever dramaturgy, illustrates the problems of those to whom life is a game with rules that can be kept or broken. That analogy, frail and loose enough, may be used to illustrate the whole point. The technique of Scribe, the technique of Pinero, for which so many critics still clamor even from Hauptmann, is a technique designed to illustrate the problems of a fixed society

in a fixed universe. To keep the rules is to be virtuous; to break them is to be a villain. Fine cases of casuistry abound; subtle plays illustrate difficult and intricate moves in a game. Hauptmann knows of no game and no rules. Meanwhile there is the universe, there is man, there is suffering. What is there to do but chronicle with understanding, compassion, reverence? What can there be at the last but a question flung out at the eternal—the question of Michael Kramer, the noblest of Hauptmann's creatures: "All this life is a fever, now hot, now cold. Ye did the same to the son of God. Ye do it to him today even as then. Today, even as then, he will not die. . . . The chimes are speaking: do you not hear them? They are telling a story to the folk on the streets—the story of me and my son. They are saying that neither of us is a lost soul. You can hear their speech clearly, word for word. Today it has come to pass; this day is the day. The chime is more than the church; the call to the table is more than the bread. Where shall we land? Whither are we driven? Why do we cry our cries into the immense incertitude, we mites abandoned in the infinite?" This spirit has worked through the theater, used the theater, stooped, if you will, to the

theater. To ask of it the technique, the tricks and devices of the mere playwright, is to reduce the whole question to the absurd. Hauptmann's dramas constitute a theater, too—a theater more like that of the Greeks, a theater of festival, worship, converse with gods.

THOMAS MANN[1]

I

THOMAS MANN is a great writer with but a single theme. In having but one theme he is not very unlike writers as different from himself, as different from each other, as Carlyle, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Shaw. Amid a thousand variations one central and controlling thought, one characteristic attitude to the totality of things, will emerge from a close study of the works of each of these. Mann differs from them by virtue of the mood out of which he attacks the substance of his vision. It is not, as in the case of all the others, an impassioned, triumphant, prophetic mood. It is shy, difficult, reserved, estranged from itself. It is the mood of a lyrical nature constantly transcending itself by sheer force of intellect and artistic self-discipline. It is a nature that yearns for music. But another strain in that nature fears music as weakness, as mere emotionalism, as self-abandonment. Mann

[1] *Buddenbrooks.* By Thomas Mann. Translated by H. Lowe-Porter.

would not yield to the musician in him nor to the lyrical poet in him. With an austere deliberation he chose prose, the most stringent and responsible of the arts, and early made himself a master of that art not only in the common matters of felicitous phrasing and expressive rhythm, but in the severer beauty that belongs to a structure at once intricate and lucid, at once orchestral and logical.

He was born in Lübeck of a family of patrician merchants such as he has shown in *Buddenbrooks*. But his father, who, one may without impertinence assume, is at least symbolized by Thomas Buddenbrook, made an even more unusual and romantic marriage than Mann's character. The mother of Thomas Mann and of his brother Heinrich was a Portuguese lady. Thus in Mann there blends the sober, exact, realistic strain of the North German and the passion and elegance of the Latin. Or, rather, these two strains did not blend. With the highest consciousness of his early maturity there came to him and within him a struggle between these two elements and, more especially, between the North German severity that regards the passion and elegance of the Latins as always a little vulgar and tawdry and the Latin warmth which

regards northern sobriety and self-restraint as always a little stupid and anaemic. And in Thomas Mann's innermost self there has always been a deep if not always a willing respect for his paternal inheritance, for those Lübeck burghers who lived with so much vanity, dignity, manliness, balanced power. He knows that these qualities easily degenerate on a lower plane into flat, fatuous, unbearable Philistinism, but he also knows—and this knowledge is set down in *Buddenbrooks* in Permaneder and Permaneder's Munich—that the ease and grace and charm of the Latin or semi-Latin temperament degenerates with equal ease into moral sloth and spiritual slackness. Had he ever been confronted with the dilemma of being either a Lübeck Philistine or a Munich Bohemian, he would have chosen the former alternative at once.

In Thomas Mann's creative work this conflict within him appears as the antithesis between two worlds—the world of art, thought, music, the world of the children of light who have, alas! no power over practical affairs and so often live without restraint, dignity, or that measured beauty of rational action which is perhaps the highest beauty, and that other world of sane action, natural joy, well-balanced acceptance of man and society which

alone can, when all is said and done, make the common lot of man tolerable and fruitful. It follows that nearly all of Thomas Mann's protagonists—Thomas Buddenbrook, Tonio Kröger, the heroes of a dozen of the impeccable shorter narratives—are all artists, thinkers, children of the light who are sick with a gross or a subtle sense of their own insufficiency, their feebleness in battling with the world of practical action, their remote but apparently inevitable relationship to the clowns, vagabonds, strolling players of an earlier age. They go down to disaster through their inability to unite in the practice of their lives the ideals of strength and light, balanced power and creative passion, distinction of gesture and action and a freedom and variety in the choice of action. This conflict is Thomas Mann's recurrent theme. It is symbolized with the highest concentration in the very few pages of a sketch called *Die Hungernden,* which is, I think, the key passage to a correct insight into all his work.

His theme is, in reality, a discord brought about by two conflicting themes, and the problem which Mann has sought to solve in both his life and his art is the problem of the resolving of this discord into harmony. The artist, then, the child of light,

who can never conquer the practical world, never share the common joys, or practice the common virtues of mankind, must introduce virtue—*virtus*—into his own domain and thus achieve personal power, distinction, dignity of soul. He can do this, like Gustav Aschenbach in *Der Tod in Venedig*, like Mann himself, by exercising the highest self-discipline, striving after the utmost solidity, lucidity, comeliness of form, yet never letting form become the master, never letting it be empty or virtuoso-like. It must be perfect through its perfect molding of substance, perfect by the test not only of beauty, but of an ultimate intellectual scrupulousness. An artist of this temper cannot only conquer a perfection that is natural to him; he can transcend himself. If he has not what the French call "the long breath" he can attain it by a series of tireless creative acts. He can turn from music, from the lyric, to prose, to epic narration, and can, by triumphing in this originally not quite native field, achieve a human dignity, a moral power that saves him from the old taint of the market-place, the many-colored rags, the gaping crowd. . . .

I have tried to give the reader of English this general insight into the personality and work of

Thomas Mann in order that *Buddenbrooks,* now at last available in our language, may meet with a more understanding appreciation. It is plainly enough, even as a mere novel, an isolated story, a very great book, a narrative of human beings and of human fates of an incomparable depth, insight, creative fullness, structual perfection. There is no turbidness in it, no faltering, no laxness. Mrs. H. T. Lowe-Porter's version contains an occasional blunder, as when she mistakes *Kräutersuppe—potage aux fines herbes*—for "cabbage soup." But, upon the whole, it is adequate and at times elegant. The translator would be the first to admit that the full beauty of Mann's prose is lost in any medium but his own. But the translation cannot obscure the magnificent architectonics of this work. Each of the eleven parts, each chapter of each part, each paragraph of each chapter, has individual charm and functional rightness in the organism of the whole structure. *Buddenbrooks* is a first-rate work of art; it is, in that special sense of Thomas Mann which I have tried to explain, an artistic deed of the highest virtue. And I am anxious that both aspects of it should be understood. For only an understanding of these two aspects can form a

proper approach to the total work of one of the noblest artists and personalities of our age.

II[1]

The reputation of Thomas Mann has been a matter neither of facile productivity nor, as I have said, of striking variety or novelty of theme, nor of the constant presence of his name in the press, nor of any of the loud and tawdry and slightly unscrupulous actions of circumstances that often make a contemporary world mistake the clamor of notoriety for the slow voice of fame. Isolated, austere, seeking through the art that was given him to render an accounting of himself and his world, believing with Goethe that invention is a vain thing, that the concrete, if it be but perfectly represented, implies symbolically yet really the entire peopled universe, this noble writer has neither cried nor striven nor made haste. *Buddenbrooks* is nearly a quarter of a century old; the two volumes of the consummately done tales and novelettes have been before the public for a good many years; the essays of the war period, "Betrachtungen eines Unpoli-

[1] *Der Zauberberg.* Von Thomas Mann. Berlin: S. Fischer. *Thomas Mann. Sein Leben und sein Werk.* Von Arthur Eloesser. Berlin: S. Fischer.

tischen" and "Rede und Antwort," did not, after all, carry on the main line of his creative activity. Now, just before his fiftieth birthday, he publishes the result of seven years of slow, ardent, vigilant labor, "Der Zauberberg." The novel is in two thick volumes. It is nearly twelve hundred pages long. It makes no concessions. Thomas Mann is not a man of concessions. Yet, as Dr. Eloesser rightly remarks, it has made the German people, in spite of sport and the movies and the demoralization of these latter years, learn to read once more. This voice was not to be denied—this voice that speaks not out of vanity, not even out of the nobler vanity of the artist, nor yet with any prophetic arrogance, but with an incomparable union of sobriety and depth concerning the fate and life and death of man. "Who is a master in truth?" Dr. Eloesser asks near the end of his eloquent and searching study. "He who helps us to live. And who can help us? Not the man of some party, the man of ready-made reasons and a ready answer, but the self-questioner, the deeply tempted, the deeply shaken who seeks ultimate reason beyond the reasons of men." The great stylist, too, the biographer goes on to explain, who seeks the beauty of the word not that it may charm and glit-

ter, but that it may the more perfectly speak—the man of high talent who sees in perfection of execution the character that he owes this talent, without which that talent would be cheap and vain.

For the definite celebration of his fiftieth birthday Thomas Mann was invited to Vienna. He lectured on "Goethe and Tolstoi"; he spoke at the dinner of the P. E. N. Club on the mystery of form; he bore out in all his words and his bearing the characterization with which Raoul Auernheimer greeted him, that of the "most responsible" of living artists. He has not the ruddy glow of Wassermann, smoldering so often with that "last infirmity of noble minds," nor the restless mobility of Schnitzler, nor the careful reserve, as careful as his frock-coat, of Galsworthy. He is not much moved by fame nor afraid of age and death, and has long sunk the patrician in the man. He might easily be mistaken for a North German or American man of business of a quiet and refined type with his narrow, dark head with hair conventionally parted on the left, clipped but not too close-clipped black mustache. Yet in his simple appearance and demeanor there is never a moment's stressing of the note of simplicity. He is neither eager for praise nor impatient of it, nor

unkindly toward the adulation of fools, but thoughtful, measured, calm, smoking his cigar, exchanging the necessary commonplaces of the dinner table without eagerness but without condescension. A supremely kind and earnest man, utterly untempted to make either kindness or earnestness or stylistic stringency the "notes" of his personality. A man "all wool," as incapable of handing out shoddy in the high matters of his trade as his merchant ancestors in Lübeck were of measuring with false measures.

In *Buddenbrooks* and in *Tonio Kröger* and elsewhere Thomas Mann sought to give a responsible accounting of himself and so of the creative artist in human society. In *Der Zauberberg* he turns to human society itself—to the European world on the edge of the great war, but unconscious of it—and lets that society, under his philosophic and emotional guidance, render an accounting of itself. He accomplishes his purpose not by telling many stories of many men nor by dealing in incident or even primarily in character. In a sanatorium near Davos, in a high, isolated world, where nature abandons the very march of the accustomed seasons and time, grown relative in actual fact, stands icily still, Thomas Mann has staged the

great debate of all the psychical forces that govern man, the great research concerning our knowledge and our ignorance of our fate, the great speculation concerning the health and the disease of mind and body, the nature of both and their relation, the high and ultimate secrets of love and death. His protagonists are men and voices, too: Setembrini, the humanist, bourgeois liberal, *rhetor,* who with all his fine truths and fine sentiments concerning the dignity and liberty of man cannot save for man either that dignity or that liberty; Naptha, the apostate Jew turned Jesuit, who strangely yet logically enough symbolizes the reactions toward power and obedience, so-called discipline and so-called order, that unite the hierarch and the proletarian, the Fascist and the communist; Behrens, the physician, the scientist pure and simple, quite honest in intent yet forced by the inevitable gaps in our knowledge into a measure of charlatanism. And all these voices, as well as the morbid siren song of Clawdia Chauchat and the indomitable vitality of the self-sufficing force of Mynheer Peperkorn, hurtle about the head of that once simple young man and titular hero, Hans Castorp, engineer of Hamburg. Once simple and straightforward and almost unreflective, but now cast, with

his abnormal temperature and acuter sensitiveness into the midst of this severe and rarefied world wherein all emotions are more direct and terrible and all ideas more trenchant and ultimate and in which the confusion of time, no longer cut and divided by business or pleasure, invites to an hourly facing of last and absolute issues. And Hans Castorp, held by this spiritualization of his inner self, held by the timelessness of time, held, too, by the fatal siren voice of the Russian temptress, clings to these strange heights of snow and pine and eternity. But the great, foul, blasting thunder that cleft through the midst of the world blasts him loose from his speculative eminence and hurls him into the mud and shame and falseness of the war.

Thus ends this book—a book so packed with the deepest experience of mankind, so broad in its philosophic range and profound in its vision, so intricate despite the superb clarity and order—*lucidus ordo*—of style and structure, that it will not reveal all its fullness or greatness to one year or even to one generation of readers. It is, as Goethe said of Faust, incommensurable. It is hard to define or describe. Much nonsense will be talked about it and I shall be living from now on in some fear of the English translation, which only

a great artist and a trained thinker could undertake with any hope of measurable success. But it is with the fullest sense of sober, critical responsibility that I may, on the one hand, call "Der Zauberberg" the Divine Comedy, no less perfect for its prose form, of our disastrous age, and, on the other hand, liken the great debates in it to those Platonic dialogues that have carried both thoughts and voices across the millennia, and yet assert that the book remains a novel, an epic narrative, enlarging and also heightening, of course, the very concept of the novel by what it is. And if our age is indeed a disastrous one, the disaster is mitigated by the vigilant nobility of such a spirit as that of Thomas Mann.

RILKE

RUMORS of the poet reached me everywhere. In the Styrian mountains Hofmannsthal, remembering the days of his own youth, spoke of Rilke. The towers and gates of Prague, the river and the Hradschin trembled in the wan sunlight of the poet's vision. Finally he was supposed to be at Foyot's in Paris. Perhaps he was. But I let the days drift by. Why trouble him with the importunity of my admiration? When I inquired he had already slipped away to that lost tower in Switzerland which has been his home since the war estranged him from all the cities of men.

Strangely enough, it was Paris that continued to emphasize the most hushed of poets and most withdrawn of men. The *Nouvelles Littéraires* wrote of him at length even before the Franco-German literary relations had been reëstablished by the receptions accorded to writers as different as Alfred Kerr and Thomas Mann. It was recalled that Rilke had been Rodin's secretary, that he had lived here and written some of his most important works

in an apartment in the Rue de la Campagne Première. The French were pleased. They were more pleased when a volume of French poems, *Vergers*, by Rilke, appeared. Next came the news that he was translating the works of Paul Valéry into German. An extremely handsome gesture was made. Among the excellent Cahiers du Mois there appeared one the other day called *Reconnaissance à Rilke*. Thirteen French men of letters, including the really emiment Valéry, contribute; appreciative voices from all countries save England and America swell this little chorus of praise and gratitude to the works and personality of a mysterious and difficult poet.

Whence comes this feeling which Francis de Miomandre calls "nostalgie de Rilke"? How many of this group of critics, French or Spanish or Polish, can hear the poet's rich, slow, incomparable music or those words of his which seem not to have been set down through the operations of a willing mind, but to have come like falling dew or drifting leaves? Of all this they hear an echo only. But upon that echo is borne to them the voice of Rilke's inner spirit, of his world-piety, of his grave, deep and mystical denial of all the vain works of man.

His vision was full and perfect long before the World War was dreamed of. But it is since the war that that vision has seemed most pertinent and persuasive to minds wearied and bewildered by the destructive thunder of the wheels of a mechanical civilization. They turn to Rilke; they seek to stand with him at that point of the inner life at which the self and the universe are no longer divided, at that point in which the soul *consents* to its continuity with an order unmiraculously perceived as divine and receives all phenomena into itself. A great vigilance and a great stillness of spirit have lead Rilke to an attitude unique in the history of either letters or thought. It is in vain that critics speak of Dostoevsky, of the undoubtedly decisive effect upon Rilke of his visit to Russia. It would be equally in vain to speak, as I am tempted to do, of Wordsworth and of "wise passiveness." Experience rather than learning will open that door. But most people, hot of heart, violent of will, are excluded from the moods that are the material of Rilke's poetry. Unlike Wordsworth, he does not need the grander aspects of nature; he avoids the complications of the human scene. A face, a street, a remembered legend, a caged animal, an heroic gesture suffice to induce

in him that mood of contemplation in which he sees "into the life of things" by being no longer divided from them. In this habitual mood of his the common contradiction between mind and nature, subject and object, is abolished. But there is, be it remarked, no deliquescence of personality, no mystical union of the I with a non-I. There is the profound perception of the identity of God and nature and the self which becomes literally

> the eye with which the universe.
> Beholds itself and knows itself divine.

Identity, or, rather, once more—continuity, undividedness. This strictly modern mystic wants no abrogation of the natural order. The natural order is the divine order. "Perform no miracle for my sake," he prays. "Let thy laws prevail which become more visible from generation to generation." And then in verses probably matchless in our time he celebrates the law of gravitation and achieves a poetic conquest of the special ideas of that time which is far to seek in the writings of those poets who have celebrated the mere mechanical aspects of civilization:

> Wenn etwas mir vom Fenster fällt
> (und wenn es auch das Kleinste wäre),

wie stürzt sich das Gesetz der Schwere
gewaltig wie ein Wind vom Meere
auf jeden Ball und jede Beere
und trägt sie in den Kern der Welt.

To the eternal laws all things yield themselves up with a trust and a humility that are prayer, security, goodness. We only in our arrogance thrust ourselves forth from the unity of things into an empty space of freedom. . . . To paraphrase Rilke thus is, of course, to distort and betray him and that marvelous texture of his work in which form and substance, flesh and spirit, the word and its incarnation, are indivisibly one. But an intellectual apprehension of his central attitude is necessary to a right appreciation of all his work and, especially, of *Das Stundenbuch,* which is like no other philosophical poem and will, in all likelihood, take its place gradually as one of the very great works of the poetic faculty and imagination. It calls toward flight from "this poor city of time," toward a new sense of the oneness in which there is neither low nor high, neither trivial nor important, but in which there breathes from all things and through all things the ineffable breath of God:

Es gibt im Grunde nur Gebete,
so sind die Hände uns geweiht,

dass sie nichts schufen was nicht flehte;
ob einer mahlte oder mähte,
schon aus dem Ringen der Geräte
entfaltete sich Frömmigkeit.

Significant for Rilke's development are, I suspect, the poems in which he remembers his childhood and adolescence. He retained, long beyond the wont of men, the child's ability to let day and dream be a continuous country. Later day and dream became appearance and reality, became the self and the universe, became the thing and God. This retrospective blending of two worlds carried over into the present of the poet's imagination is well illustrated by the beautiful "Dream of Boyhood":

Oh, I should love to be like one of those
Who through the night on tameless horses ride
With torches like disheveled tresses wide
Which the great wind of gallop streaming blows.
And I would stand as on a shallop's prow,
Slender and tall and like a banner rolled,
Dark but for helmeting of ruddy gold
That glints and gleams. Behind me in a row
Ten men who from the equal darkness glow
With helmets of the changeful gold designed,
Now clear as glass, now dark and old and blind.
And one near me blows me a vision of space

Upon a trumpet glittering that cries
Or makes a solitary blackness rise
Through which as in a rapid dream we race:
The houses slant behind us to their knees,
The crooked streets to meet us bend and strain,
The squares flee from us: but we grapple these
The while our horses rustle like the rain.

As the boy stood within his dream so the mature poet stands within his world. From the periphery where one *observes*, his temperament carried him effortlessly to the center where one *experiences*. Truth comes to him who keeps the vigil of eternity. . . . From these interpretative statements it is easy to derive Rilke's silent opposition to the naturalistic movement in literature; it is equally easy to see why all the expressionistic poets consider him their master. . . . But better than any critical and interpretative statement is a poem of his own—"Der Schauende" (he who looks on contemplatively)—in which he has expressed his attitude and vision in almost definitely philosophic terms:

I see what storms of trees have made
That in the long mild days unended
Against my anxious panes descended;
I hear far things half comprehended

That I cannot endure unfriended
Nor love without a sister's aid.

The storm, a strange creator, falters
Through wold and heath and time and fate,
And all is ageless that he alters:
The landscape like the eternal Psalter's
Verses in sternness and in weight.

Petty is all wherewith we have striven,
What strives with us austere and great.
Had we, like to the dumb things, given
Ourselves by storm-winds to be driven,
Our lives were wide and without date.

What we o'ercome is the diurnal,
Even our successes make us small,
The unaccustomed and eternal
Will not bow down to us at all.
It is that angel who contended
With warriors in old histories
Who felt his adversary straining
With sinews that, like metal, gaining
Tautness, beneath his hands extended
To harp-strings of deep melodies.

Whom this great Angel overcame
That oft the humbler foe rejected,
In light and righteousness erected
From that stern hand goes forth his frame

By molding as of God completed.
No victories can make him free.
His triumph is: to be defeated
By ever loftier powers than he.

The three books of *Das Stundenbuch*—Concerning the Monastic Life, Concerning Pilgrimage, Concerning Poverty and Death—are expansions, infinitely rich and profound and often intricate, of the last three verses of the poem I have translated. Implicit in those verses, as well as in the preceding ones, is Rilke's pantheism—a word that omits all the warmth and humility and love of his vision—his quietism, his cultivation, unique and perhaps uniquely needed in our age, of the life of utter contemplativeness. Yet like all major poets, like every spirit who deserves the name of master, Rilke rises in the book Concerning Poverty and Death from the intense hush of his usual verses to the monition and the stronger music of a Messianic cry. It is the cities with their false mechanical civilization, with their lie concerning progress, that keep men from nature and from God, from divine poverty, and from ripening like trees toward the ultimate beauty of their death. Power must be broken:

The kings of this world are grown old
And leave not any heirs behind them:

metal, now money and machines, must shrink back into the veins of the hills. Men must become conscious of their slavery. An iron note enters Rilke's description of the false and bitter lives of the slaves of the cities:

Und ihre Menschen dienen in Kulturen
Und fallen tief aus Gleichgewicht und Mass,
und nennen Fortschritt ihre Schneckenspuren
und fahren rascher, wo sie langsam fuhren,
und fühlen sich und funkeln wie die Huren
und lärmen lauter mit Metal und Glas.

But his more habitual note is not one of condemnation. It is that of a compassion at once aloof and tender:

For, Lord, the crowded cities be
Desolate and divided places.
Flight as from flames upon their ways is,
And comfortless of any graces
Their little time fades utterly.
And men who dwell there heavy and humbly move
About dark rooms with dread in all their bearing,
Less than the springtime flocks in fire and daring,
And somewhere breathes and watches earth for faring,
But they are here and do not know thereof.

And children grow up where the shadows falling
From wall and window have the light exiled,
And know not that without the flowers are calling
Unto a day of distance, wind and wild—
And every child must be a saddened child.
There blossom virgins to the unknown turning
Who for their childhood's faded rest are fain,
And do not find for what their souls are burning,
And trembling close their timid buds again.
And bear in chambers shadowed and unsleeping
The days of disappointed motherhood
And the long night's involuntary weeping
And the cold years devoid of glow or good.
In utter darkness stand their deathbeds lowly
For which through gradual years the gray heart pants;
They die as though in chains, and dying slowly
Go forth from life in guise of mendicants.

In the cities the rich are not rich nor the poor poor; all are the prisoners of things dead because torn out of their natural and divine place and order. Men do not lead their own lives nor die their own deaths. In page after page of great and perfect verse Rilke calls for a savior from the disgraces of our lives. The savior will bring life that is vision, death that is ripeness. In verses like the resonance of golden trumpets Rilke prays that that savior be established in the grace and ancient radiance of God and that he himself may be dancer

before that new ark of the Covenant, proclaimer, tongue and baptist of the new Messiah:

> Du aber gründe ihn in deine Gnade,
> in deinem alten Glanze pflanz ihn ein;
> und mich lass Tänzer dieser Bundeslade,
> lass mich den Mund der neuen Messiade,
> den Tönenden, den Täufer sein.

I have spoken of only two of Rilke's volumes, *Das Buch der Bilder* and *Das Stundenbuch*, and have omitted both his fitful prose as well as his earlier and later verses. He is so little known among us—more like a legendary name than a living poet—that what is needed is first of all to make him and his work accessible to the lover of poetry. If this is a difficult task in respect of the poet's spiritual character, it is an even harder one in respect of the form in which that spiritual character is so completely incarnated. For that form has, superficially viewed, two marks that seem contradictory. Even from my few quotations and my wholly inadequate versions it will be seen that Rilke uses the entire vocabulary of the language. There are no prosaic words. He writes "*Gesetz der Schwere*" (law of gravitation); he writes "*Fortschritt*" (progress); he writes "*Gleichgewicht*" (equilibrium). In the texture of his verse

these words are not only thoroughly poetical, but fresh and magical. It is in harmony with this principle that Rilke has abandoned all licenses and verse devices. His syntax is always the syntax of prose. (It is in this respect that the translator is forced to betray the poet most grossly.) Hence his verse has an initial naturalness and fluidity. On the other hand, it will be observed that Rilke constantly uses alliteration and internal rhyme and is an incomparable master of the contrasts and harmonies of vowel music. But the use of these methods is never facile. Language is to Rilke more than a means of expression; it is a material like marble or gold or alabaster which has its own laws and possibilities and methods of treatment. It must be wrought into a beauty proper to it as sustance. But the poet never forgets the emotional and conceptual aspects of speech. Hence words must be significantly beautiful; alliteration becomes symbol of meaning and orchestration of thought. Thus when, in my last quotation, Rilke prays concerning the Messiah: "Gründe ihn in deine Gnade" (Ground him in thy Grace) the sensitive reader will hear at once out of the difficulty of those hard initial gutturals the striving ardor of that deep establishment in the divine.

When Rilke writes, "Und alles ist wie ohne Alter" ("And all is ageless that he alters"), there streams from that vowel-alliteration on *a* both strange wonder and a breath of eternity. Yet, as in that very line, a scrupulous simplicity and prosaic directness of speech is observed. I am aware of the vanity and incompleteness of all such observations. But they too may not be wholly useless in helping to make accessible one of the few living writers—how few they are!—in whose work the vigilant spirit can hear the pulse-beat of eternity.

Part Four: Frenchmen

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT: 1821–1921

THE romantic historical pageantry which surrounds the city of Rouen will yield more and more in interest and even splendor to the memories of that white house at Croisset near the city in which Gustave Flaubert lived and wrote. For his personality and his work are, in a word that is often falsely but here at last justly used, epoch-making. The modern novel, which is not only a form of art, but a new way of applying human vision to the world, is inconceivable without him. Zola made a great noise in his time and his imitators do so still. But the works that transcend the noises of their day, from "Esther Waters" to "Of Human Bondage," and from "Washington Square" to "Main Street," owe the character of their innermost being to the author of "Madame Bovary" and "L'Éducation sentimentale."

Flaubert taught the novelist the central truth that to render reality is enough. He saw that moral power and spiritual significance inhere in the material, in the personal vision which is identical with style, and in the interpenetration of these two.

Thus he eliminated at once both the pointing of morals and the adorning of tales, and exemplified the organic character of the truth and the beauty of his art.

It would be easy to illustrate the establishment of this principle from his books. But these are in all hands. He spoke out clearly and memorably in that magnificent correspondence which is but little known among us. There is the evidence that he worked always with a high and austere kind of consecration. "I seek no port, but the high seas. If my ship is wrecked I ask no one to grieve." That has an heroic sound. "Love art rather than yourself. It is a love that will not fail you; sickness will not touch it, nor death. Worship the idea which alone is true because it alone is eternal." To embody the idea was his mission, and to embody it in perfect works. "Toil and, above all, meditate. Condense your thought. Purple patches are futile. Unity—everything is in that! A whole—that is what our writers, big or little, fail of today. A thousand fine passages don't constitute a work. Compress your style. Weave a tissue as supple as silk and as strong as a coat of mail."

He discovered early the inner method by which

such works could be built. "To see that a thing is interesting, it is only necessary to contemplate it long enough." Thus his matter was easily at hand. "Let us try to see things as they are and not be cleverer than God who made them. . . . It doesn't matter from what we draw poetry, for it lies in all things and places." In this way he came to see the beauty of "the moral density which dwells in many ugly things" and to experience the strange ecstasy of the artist when "external reality so enters into him as to make him almost cry out with the need of rendering it." Nor did he fail to draw the necessary philosophical inferences from this specific relation of the creative mind to the world. "What sustains me is the conviction that I dwell in the true, and doing so I not only dwell in the good but fulfill a duty and execute justice." His selective range excluded only what hid and bedizened and falsified itself. He loved "even the ignoble when it is sincere. But whatever lies and poses, whatever condemns passion and has the grimace of virtue—that revolts me utterly."

His preoccupation with style which Pater described in a well-known passage was, after all, the servant of his controlling search for reality. "There are two men in me: one a lyrist, a lover of

the strange, the haunting, the sonorous. The other desires to make the things he describes felt almost in their material nature." It was the second man who prevailed; it was he who saw that style is not in technique nor in the hunt for beautiful words, but is "in itself alone an absolute manner of seeing things." He had, like every artist, hours of a sheer delight in the mere texture of his art and in such hours dreamed "of a style as rhythmic as verse, as precise as the language of the sciences, but with the moaning vibrations of the 'cello and with tongues of flame." In the end, however, he returned always to the concept of style as the result of a personal and creative relation to truth.

From all the passages here quoted there arises the spirit and mood that make Gustave Flaubert a sort of patron saint of men of letters everywhere. They sustain to him a relation peculiarly close and warm. He is, more truly than Johnson, the man of letters as hero. No one else has had his supreme and laborious faith in the life of art in itself; no one has more magnificently exemplified that faith in his practice. "May I die like a dog rather than hasten a phrase that isn't ripe." He kept his word. He remains ideal and example, teacher and practitioner, road and goal.

BAUDELAIRE[1]

M. ADOLPH VAN BEVER has published a "texte intégral" of the diaries of Baudelaire and three editions have been rapidly exhausted. So M. van Bever is a little triumphant over the success of his venture. This book, he assures us, permits us to penetrate the "ultimate thought" of the author of *Les Fleurs du Mal.* In his innocent eagerness he goes further and announces it as certain that these diaries serve to give the world a clear comprehension of the inner nature "of a poet of modern times." Well, M. van Bever is an exact bibliographer and knows an æsthetically fine verse when he sees it. But here he falls into a stale and not quite harmless error. Baudelaire's technique is modern, though far from revolutionary. Modern, too, is the vibrant music of his verses and their long-drawn melancholy cry. But his troubles, his "thoughts," are as old as Christianity itself, and his suffering no more original than sin. There was St. Augustine; there were the anchorites in the Libyan

[1] Charles Baudelaire, *Journaux Intimes.* Avec une Préface par Ad. van Bever. Crés et Cie. Paris.

desert; there were the flagellants, and there was Charles Baudelaire. They all agreed heartily that nature is of the devil and that, as the French poet recorded in his diary, "there are in every man, at every hour, two simultaneous urges—one toward God (spirituality) and one toward the devil (animality)." He could not drive the devil out, and public self-flagellation was no longer in fashion. So he tormented himself in his diaries and printed *Les Fleurs du Mal.*

The title of that book shows that Baudelaire was quite clear about himself. Nor do the diaries accomplish more than to illustrate and confirm what every reader of the poems must long have suspected. They are the records not of a sophisticated but of a simple soul, not of a fiery rebel but of a humble traditionalist, not of an unbeliever but of one of the least of the faithful. No pagan could have written:

> L'Amour est assis sur le crâne
> De l'Humanité.

It does not fit his case. Nor would he have sighed so grievously and hopelessly for

> les voluptés calmes
> Au milieu de l'azur, des vagues, des splendeurs.

He possesses these or goes after them. But Baudelaire had nothing to cultivate except his own hysteria, which he did consciously "with delight and terror." He never doubted its reality; he did not know that it sprang directly from his sense of sin.

Once, he tells us, there was a discussion concerning love. A good many silly things were evidently said. "As for me," he writes, "I declared that the unique and supreme delight of love lies in one's certainty that one is doing evil, and men and women know from their birth that all delight is found in evil." There is no doubting his sad sincerity. His was the unbearable dilemma of the violent dualist. Since everything agreeable is sinful and devilish, but since he cannot conquer the pang of his yearning, what is there left him but an alternation of sin and self-torment, with a middle region in which, if he is lucky enough to be gifted, he can find brief liberation in the practice of some art? So Baudelaire sinned a little and repented a great deal and wrote verses. He was neither ancient nor modern; he was neither like Horace nor like Goethe. He was a good mediæval. The journals pass from a tortured obscenity to an equally tortured asceticism. They

remind one far more of a saint than they do of a satyr. For he was merciless on himself. "True civilization consists of the eradication of all traces of original sin." So he was quite willing that he and his works should go under if but the good might prevail. In the meantime he considered "commerce infamous because it is natural," declared the invention of printing to be the "great obstacle to the development of beauty," and planned both to "glorify the cult of images—my grand, my unique, my primitive passion," and to demonstrate to the world the necessity for beating women!

He had from the first little enough chance to cultivate a clear and sane inner life. He was assailed early—how early he does not tell us—by a "*gout précoce des femmes.*" None of the psychical processes that thus arose within him could be carried to a conclusion in action and were promptly transformed into the characteristic symptoms of a malady of the soul. The boy began to confound "*l'odeur de la fourrure avec l'odeur des femmes*" and to translate his repressed instincts into morbid exercises of the sense of smell and into impulses of cruelty. It was thus and not by some effort of thought that he came to discover "the intimate

alliance between ferocity and love" and to set up psychical defenses against the unattainable by identifying love with evil and woman with "the necessary accomplice of a crime." "I have always been astonished," he says, "that people permit women to enter churches." No wonder, since they troubled him so. Nor is it surprising that, seeking a vicarious relief for his crippled impulses, he saw the true saint in politics as one "who whips and kills the people for its own good." He was powerless, and therefore violent. But such violence and such perversity are not, as Nordau wrongly reasoned, the signs of a native ugliness or necessary abnormality. They are the cries of nature, tugging at its leash, wounding itself against the bars if its cage. By some inner or outer compulsion men are all Manichees. Some of them think beyond that primitive, pain-wrought vision of the moral life. But Baudelaire fell in, during his impressionable years, with Joseph de Maistre, who deepened his rigid sense of sin, and with Poe, who confirmed his habit of releasing his instincts through images of horror, dread, and an unearthly melancholy. And these two, poor Baudelaire says, "taught me to think." Confusion can go no further.

The picture is complete, and though the materials for it have long been accessible, it is different enough from the conventional one. Baudelaire was not the magnificent rebel, the somber and disdainful Satanist of Swinburne's stormy elegy, no seer of "secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us," no conscious and deliberate "gardener of strange flowers," no willing worshiper of "that obscure Venus of the hollow hill." He was a poor Christian man tormented by a sense of sin. He records in his diary his determination to eat fish and take cold baths and avoid intoxicants, to let no morning pass without addressing his prayers to God—source of all power and justice, and to plead for the intercession of his father, his sister, and Edgar Allan Poe. He prays to be permitted to obey daily the commands of "duty and prudence." Thus an almost childlike tone follows and alternates with the violence and obscenity of some passages. And that tone prevails in the end even though at moments the old Adam is strong within him. "Nothing is irreparable. There is still time. Who knows whether even new pleasures . . . ?" But he does not himself believe in the reality of such speculations and returns to humility and to the practice of propitiatory religious exercises. His native vigor

had been warped and broken at the start. Beauty was his refuge, but it was a vague and melancholy beauty, swathed in mystery and wounded by regret.

He could in a peevish moment declare Milton's Satan the "perfect type of virile beauty." But one knows he does not really mean Satan, but only Byron or even—Steerforth. And almost at once he slips back into supernaturalism and self-irony and frank mediævalism. The sins that he has not sinned fester like a spear in his side, but he has believed in Satan too sincerely to yield to him and draw the weapon out. His soul wandered in a thick throttling mist. The wages of sin may be death; the wages of believing too deeply in sin is death in life.

FRENCH POET: NEW STYLE

FROM the most representative of the new anthologies of modern French verse the name of Verlaine has been omitted. Was his form too fixed or his Catholicism too simple-hearted? Régnier is omitted too. Of the symbolists only Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and Maeterlinck remain. All the others are outside of the tradition of the truly modern spirit. The line of that spirit is Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Lautréamont, Charles Cros, Germain Nouveau. And what is that modern spirit? Deliverance from verbalism, from the slavery of words. "Words, syntax, sense become definitely the slaves of poetry." I move about among these notions and schools very tentatively: "Fantaisistes," "unanimistes," "simultanéistes," "cubistes," "dadaistes," "surréalistes." I am a rank outsider. I become immensely aware of that when I read, among these founders of all the latest movements, the poems of the Comte de Lautréamont. "Old ocean, you are so powerful that men have learned it at their own expense. In vain do they employ all the resources of their genius . . .

incapable of dominating you. They have found their master." No, I have not made that up nor turned poetry into journalese. My version is precisely like the original, *"Vieil ocean, tu es si puissant, que les hommes l'ont appris à leurs propres dépens. Ils ont beau employer . . ."* And so on. Is this then a deliverance from verbalism? Or is it to be found in Laforgue: *"Lainages, caoutchoucs, pharmacie, rêve . . . . . "*? Perhaps. And whither does it tend? *"J'écarte l'eloquence,"* declares M. Jean Cocteau. But so, in different words, did Verlaine. Of course M. Cocteau goes farther. He depends for his formless form on his subconscious mind, and I must try to render a brief specimen from his early and extraordinarily interesting "Ebauche d'un art poétique."

I premeditate no architecture
Simply
deaf
like thee Beethoven

blind
like thee
Homer
innumerable old man

born everywhere

I work out
in the prairies of interior
silence.

But is this kind of writing without architecture? Has not a very subtle and aware mind been busy even with the typographical arrangement? Above all, was Beethoven deaf in the sense insinuated here? Was the composer of the Ninth Symphony and of the last string quartets not rather the ear with which, to vary Shelley a little, the universe heard and knew itself? Then is not M. Cocteau merely playing with loose metaphors?

No, I am no mere praiser of time past and I know very well both that M. Cocteau is an extremely gifted man and that he has long ceased writing in the manner of the verses I have quoted. What I am concerned with is a tentative diagnosis of himself and his generation. He was born in 1892; he fought in the war; the other day he announced himself a Catholic—if not of the type of Claudel, then of the type of Péguy. He started out with Satie, the music-halls, Picabia and Picasso; science was a cold frenzy to him. He flew with Garros. I have a vision of him: the cold glow of an electric bulb in his precocious brain. Is it any wonder that he is a Catholic? From intoxication to

intoxication has been his course. Will he ever touch sobriety?

He started out with the day, the hour, the minute, wholly at the mercy of the illusions of the tangible.

> voici les rag-times énormes
> les courts-circuits.

Even amid these tangible things he was not selective. *"Mains d'ectoplasme et poulpes d'ombre."* And then

> Des chromatismes
> jamais vus
> empèchent
> la tuberculose.

A fact of enormous importance. But the fact is not literature. Only its repercussion upon the soul can be. Amid the cold crackle of "Tentative d'Évasion," the technical pirouettes, the cerebral antics, there are shy moments in which the poet in M. Cocteau struggles for breath. The poet is promptly throttled. The terror of *vieux jeu* is too imminent. The result?

J'ai mal d'être homme comprenez vous. No wonder. Airplanes, hangars, Pullmans, gangrene, chloroform, cinematographs, Underwoods, loco-

motives, Gulf Stream, Eskimos, rubber, aluminum. More flights of and with Garros. Flights south

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And always from time to time amid these icy and calculated ravings the involuntary note of the poet:

Soudain la note Mélisande
trouant la vôute
et le silence
entre chez Dieu
pur jet d' eau.

The note is repeated, the violences are soothed and the stridency softened in the "Discours du Grand Sommeil." These are poems of the war written during the war. "Translated from what? From that dead speech, from that dead land in which my friends are dead." Beautiful things these poems, gentle and yet strong, disillusioned from the first concerning that "epidemic of crime," warm-hearted, civilized:

How do you expect me, Amette,
To hate the Germans?
Tuesday night the fusiliers
of the listening-post at Mamelon Vert
invited two Germans over
so that they could play at cards.
The admiral condemns them to death.

Personally I do not see in what that differs from prose. But that old quarrel need not be reawakened. For very soon thereafter—and in this respect, too, M. Cocteau is symbol and type—music, first faint, then more definite begins to invade his verse. Very faint and childlike and pseudo-primitive at first:

Fais moi un peu m'habituer,
à ce que mon pauvre ami Jean soit tué.

But soon in the "Poésies" (1920) the music grows fuller, the throw-backs to the old delusion of hard discord and mere breathless speed grow rarer. In "Plain-Chant" (1923) M. Cocteau has definitively joined the great tradition of poetic form and ends upon an Alexandrine of strictly classic contour:

Arrache ce laurier qui me coupe la peau.

What, meantime, has been the development of his substance? Toward conceits, toward sheer

Marinism—toward that escape into the little, the curious, the far-fetched which has been, save for a few isolated ecstatic hymns, the refuge of Catholic poets from Crashaw to John Bannister Tabb.

> Dans le bocage de mes os,
> Dans l'arbre bleu de mes artères,
> Mêlez-vous, fleurs, poissons, oiseaux,
> Si mal réunis sur la terre.

Nor do we have to wait long for the more specific Catholic note of a treatment of the supernatural through the fancy:

> La nuit d'Avril est votre prie-Dieu, Sainte-Viegre.

Soon we come upon conceits applied to the rococco vision of the classical; we seem to be in the very midst of the "metaphysical" poets at their most far-fetched, when M. Cocteau epigrammatizes Narcissus:

> Celui qui dans cette eau séjourne
> Demasqué, vécut s'intriguant.
> La mort, pour rire, le retourne
> A l'envers, comme un doigt de gant.

Then appear poems directly addressed to the Virgin and we no longer believe M. Cocteau when he says that the jazz-band drum is his violin. It is a

mere intrusion of a self long dead. We do believe him when, for a moment, he abandons his conceits to be plaintive and conscious of sin:

> Je n'ai plus, d'être heureux, ni l'espoir, ni l'envie

and when, in true Baudelairien and Catholic fashion, he mingles the perverse with the devotional:

> Mais l'ange gardien qui casse nos poupées,
> A des ailes aussi comme une demoiselle.

In "Plain-Chant" the music becomes more and more sonorous, the substance in itself more human, but the treatment, the conceits and contortions of the fancy more violent and outrageous:

> Notre entrelacs d'amour à des lettres ressemble,
> Sur un arbre se mélangeant;
> Et, sur ce lit, nos corps s'entortillent ensemble,
> Comme à ton nom le nom de Jean.

What is Donne's compass to that? Can it be that this seventeenth centuryish Catholic poet was, a few short years ago, the mad Dadaist who flew with Garros?

In his verse M. Cocteau asks us to believe that the change in him was an unconscious one. "If my way of singing is not the same here, alas, I cannot help it. I always suffer when I am waiting for a

poem, and take what comes to me." But in his recent volume of essays, *Le Rappel à l'Ordre*, he has admirably rationalized and explained his abandoning of his first manner: "To say 'let us be modern' is senseless. . . . It is absurd to try to make poetry modern by confounding the letter and the spirit and to over-emphasize 'décor.'" How true and sound that is! But M. Cocteau has made a strange use of his new wisdom. For one escape he has substituted another; from the machine he has passed to the Virgin, from myth to myth.

He illustrates an experience and a malady of our time. Science was to save us; the machine was to conquer the earth. All traditions were to be broken, all art was to be remade, the everlasting symbols of communication between man and man, growing out of human nature and therefore conformable to it, were to be tossed aside. Painters painted in cubes and in bits of steel stuck on wood, musicians sought for cacophonies, poets celebrated in shredded prose the machine, the jazz-band, and the cinema. Then came the war and the machine came near wrecking our laboriously built civilization. The gentler spirits, like Cocteau, underwent something like a conversion and experienced a spiritual revulsion against the idols of their earliest

years. But they were not strong enough nor gifted with enough insight to turn to the saving tradition of reason which has never over-valued the fashions or inventions of the hour, but used them and subordinated them to its eternal purpose. These poets, seeing their machine-god smashed, turned to ecclesiastical images. They needed an image before which to bow down. They left the hangar to Garros and went to Chartres with Péguy. A pitiful conclusion. But Europe is today under the sign of that pathetic reaction in both literature and politics. Especially in France Catholicism is coloring literature more and more. Even Jewish writers are fleeing to the church. Erect and enlightened spirits from before the flood, like Paul Valéry, stand unmoved. But a younger generation is seeking convalescence from the madness of the machine in stained glass and incense and a feeble toying with conceits. Perhaps the children of today will re-ally themselves with the tradition of those who, never succumbing to the machine, never reacted from it and through war, peace, and reaction kept their heads.

Part Five: Jews

HEINE

THE most translated and traduced of poets will not let the world rest. In Germany the vitality of his works and personality is electric. He is at the core of the tempests between reactionaries and Reds, between Nordics and non-Nordics. To prove that this man was not and could not have been a German poet is the chief life-work of at least one learned and gifted historian of literature. Meanwhile editions of Heine's works increase and the revolutionary youth of Germany nourishes itself on his substance and example if no longer on his style. And meanwhile, too, in England and America there persists the silly legend that Heine is not only the greatest but indeed the sole German lyrist since Goethe, and ladies like Miss Horine continue to mistake the ease of his verses for slovenliness, and gentlemen like Mr. Michael Monahan continue to enlighten the world with remarks to the effect that Heine's "song is the nightingale in pain." [1] Both the translations and the facile adu-

[1] *Heinrich Heine. Romance and Tragedy of the Poet's Life.* By Michael Monahan.

lation do the poet no service. The ravings of the arch-anti-Semite Bartels are more profitable.

It is, happily, not difficult to clear the murky air that has a habit of gathering about this man and his work. Bartels and his less hectic colleagues are right in this, that Heine is not a lyrist of the most intimate and inimitable German tradition and it takes no "German heart" to feel the difference between him and Storm, Möricke, Falke, or some of the early verses of the redoubtable Bartels himself. And it may help to clear that murky air to say that I am myself inordinately devoted to that specific tradition of German lyrical poetry. The English poet most closely akin in style and substance to such a lyrist as Storm is A. E. Housman. And, from a narrow but not at all negligible point of view, a case could be made out for holding Housman to be a poet of more permanent value than Browning. But to blame Heine for not being Storm is as childish as it would be to blame Browning for not being Housman. The critical problem is complicated, but only slightly complicated, by the fact that Heine, issuing from the romantic school, set out in his early verses to be, if not a Theodor Storm, then a Wilhelm Müller. Many of these early verses are now seen to be incurably

artificial and false; they do not belong to the Heine that counts. This stuff about nightingales and roses and flirting violets with its constant and trivial use of the "pathetic fallacy"[1] is vapid and wilted. The trouble is that the Miss Horines and the Mr. Monahans both in Germany and here keep emphasizing it. You will never see them quote such lapidary lyrical masterpieces as "Das Glück ist eine leichte Dirne" or the orchestral crash of "An die Jugend" or "Salomo" or the great ballads, visions, apocalypses of the "Romancero." They go on talking about the fir tree that dreams of the palm. Heine is not so adorable a lyrist as Goethe or Storm or Möricke or Eichendorff. Divine simplicity is precisely not his note. Neither was it Victor Hugo's nor Byron's. There is false romanticism in Heine as there is false romanticism in Byron. Heine could not have written Goethe's "Mailied" any more than Byron could have written Wordsworth's "Lucy" poems. But Byron wrote "Don Juan" and Heine "Romancero."

How could Heine have had the divine simplicity of the earth-rooted poets? He was, as he himself said, the last of the romantics; he was the

[1] *Heine's Poems.* Translated from the German. By Clare Horine.

first of the realists. He was a German—very truly and passionately a German; he was a Jew and an outcast. These are no cheap antitheses in the manner of Macaulay. Pain and blood, defeated ardor and grinding humiliation, cling to them. The famous or, as the Pan-German professors would have it, the notorious poem endings in which the romantic mood is riven, loveliness flung into the icy light of common day, and the critical intelligence crashes through the poetic vision—these endings are the symbols of the tragic division within Heine himself and rise, by virtue of the potency and magic of his personality, into symbols of the two major moods that in both literature and life struggle for supremacy in the whole of modern civilization. Of course Heine is not so exquisite a lyrist as Eichendorff. He is a poet and personality of European import.

His prose has contributed not a little to his influence and power. A good deal of the early prose shares the fate of the early verses. Whole sections of the "Reisebilder" are affected and florid. Yet even here there is a mastery of German prose as a medium of world expression and communication that had quite simply not existed since Lessing. In the later books, in *The Romantic School*, the treat-

ise *On Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, the political and critical reports sent year after year from Paris there are many pages so pregnant with the significance of Europe's essential life that seventy years of change, of industrial revolution, of catastrophes in the mind and the world, have not robbed them of their native life.

Well, when with all the pleasure in life you give up to the Pan-German professors Heine's early poems or, at least, a good many of them and a good deal of his early prose, and grant them not only freely but eagerly that neither the *Buch der Lieder* nor the *Reisebilder* is a masterpiece and that the influence of the former on the development of German poetry was, during the years from 1850 to 1880, demonstrably bad—when you have done all that, they are not yet contented. They add: He had neither character nor conviction. He was, in fact, a dirty fellow.

The most ill-guided of the poet's admirers are those who, in answer to such assertions, try to make Heine out to have been a gentleman of high personal dignity, scrupulous honor, unselfish idealism. That is nonsense. Still more nonsensical is the assertion of the æsthetes that character makes no difference in an artist. It makes all the difference.

Art is expression of the self and of the experience of that self in the world, and the nature of that self is ultimately identical with the nature of the art product. But this self, this thing that we call character, is neither accidental nor blankly self-originating. The question is not, Was Heine a "good" man or not? The pertinent question is something like this: How would the fierce Bartels and the suaver Belloc have borne themselves in the world had they been born with sick nerves and the power and pride and susceptibility of genius, and been born Jews barely removed from the restrictions of the mediæval Ghetto, told to assimilate or get out, and, having made both the gesture and the effort of assimilation, still suffered exile, obloquy, fame embittered by irrelevant imputations, friendship poisoned by superstitious fears? I am profoundly offended by Heine's official "conversion" and by his French pension. I have the right to be. I am not impressed by his relations with his mother. They were beautiful. But they are characteristic of every Jewish home. But Bartels and Belloc—I use their names symbolically—are guilty of the merest effrontery when they are offended by the conversion and the pension. Their ancestors demanded the conversion as a pre-

requisite of professional activity and told the Jew to be a German, as with his whole heart he desired to be, and then suppressed his writings and made his continued stay in Germany next to impossible. It is quite true that in an outer sense Heine did not suffer very severely. The point is that he was a man of genius and the monstrousness of the situation is in the injustice of his having been made, on these grounds and after this manner, to suffer at all. In brief, I do not defend either his actions or his at times disgusting controversial methods. He was what the impact of his particular world upon his particular spirit necessarily made him. Praise and blame are mere babbling here. The same forces that molded his character also molded his work. That is all we know, all we can know. The man and the work are one—full of pain, warped by wrong, the reverse of Olympian, of noble and serene, but also possessing a somber glow, less beautiful than portentous, drawn from the fires of certain central problems of both art and history and as radiant today as on the day he died.

GEORG BRANDES[1]

GEORG BRANDES is one of the great humanists of the age. Born in a small country, his mind embraced the world. Stern and yet warm, incorruptible by friendship or favor, that mind has watched the varying and tragic fortunes of Europe with a profound understanding, a high and saddened benignity. Brandes has always been a good European. In 1870 he watched with Renan the inevitable downfall of the Third Empire; in 1914 he stood not loosely but critically above the battles; today, in his extreme old age, he proclaims with strong but tempered indignation the sordid machinations by which a group of Powers plunged Greece into disaster and stood by in brutal inaction while Smyrna became crimson with blood and shame.

Yet this man has been neither politician nor even publicist. He has been a critic and an historian of literature. But his art or craft or science has not

[1] *Main Currents of Nineteenth Century Literature.* By Georg Brandes. Six volumes. *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century.* By Georg Brandes. *Hellas Einst und Jetzt.* Von Georg Brandes.

meant to him the exploitation of technical scholarship, vast and accurate as his learning is, nor has it been an exercise in æsthetic appreciation despite his sensitiveness to the color of prose, the magic of landscape, the cadence of verse. Long before the days of the Croceans he declared all art to be expression, significant and concentrated expression of the entire inner process of civilization. Hence to him the history of literature has been the history, first of fiery and articulate souls, then of the dumb feeling masses for whom the poets spoke, and so the essential history of mankind itself. His work, then, it is clear, differs wholly from that of the Saintsburys, to whom literature consists of a loose series of delightful exercises in mere writing; nor, on the other hand, has Brandes, like Taine or Villemain or even Scherer, permitted himself to be ensnared by a theory, whether pseudo-scientific or nationalistic, that is antecedent to the literary and human fact. The very function of criticism has seemed to him indeed incompatible with such or any prejudgment. "For it is criticism," he declares, "which removes mountains—the mountains of belief in authority, of prejudice, of thoughtless power and dead tradition."

It is well to give his theory of the writing of

literary history in his own words. The libraries and universities of the world are crowded with men ambitious to add to the history of literature and quite forgetful of the fact that their labors produce no more than the raw material from which the true historian will some day weave the texture of his work. "I shall endeavor, on the one hand," Brandes wrote long ago, "to treat the history of literature as humanly as possible, to go as deep down as I can, to seize upon the remotest, innermost psychological movements which prepared for and produced the various literary phenomena; and, on the other hand, I shall try to present the result in as plastic and tangible a form as possible. . . . First and foremost, therefore, I shall trace everywhere the connection between literature and life. . . . I go down to the foundations of real life and show how the emotions which find their expression in literature arise in the human heart." He has not, I must add, deceived himself as to the scientific or objective accuracy of the result. He knows with Anatole France that history and criticism, like poetry and music, are but a part of that visionary pageantry by which man makes human and beautiful the naked and inhuman world. Thus at the end of his chief work Brandes makes the

crucial admission: "The power which has grouped, contrasted, thrown into relief or suppressed, lengthened or shortened, placed in full light, in half light, or in shadow, is none other than that never entirely conscious power to which we usually give the name of art."

No better time than this could have been chosen to reissue the famous *Main Currents of Nineteenth Century Literature.* The work is fresh and strong; it burns with its own fire and light. It does more than that. It illuminates the troubled present. Revolution and devastating war have come over Europe once more. And we find there once more many of the psychological and so literary phenomena that Brandes chronicles of an earlier period. Once more we have the psychology of the emigré, once more the rhetoric of reaction, as in Papini, once more the flight from reality, once called romanticism, now expressionism, once more as in Shelley or the later writers of the Young Germany group, valiant fighters in humanity's long war of liberation.

But I must not give the impression, long as this book has been famous, that Brandes is exclusively *kultur geschichtlich* or neglects the vital matter of beauty which is eternal and transcends both the

squabbles and disasters of history. He knows that "nothing formless or only half-formed endures." And he does not hesitate to apply this criterion to so massive a figure as that of Balzac. No English-speaking critic, on the other hand, could show himself more profoundly thrilled by the music of Shelley. And with this blending of sagacity and sensitiveness he produces passage after passage which exemplifies the fact which he restates in the preface to his latest collection of essays: "Criticism is an art, though it is not usually mentioned as one of the fine arts." Among such passages in the *Main Currents* it is worth while pointing out the exquisite description of Thorwaldsen's "Night" and its alienation from the gloom and splendor of the Greek vision, the direct appeal to experience in the analysis of the romantic attitude to nature, the brief but stirring parallel between Shelley and Novalis, the serene appreciation of Landor's Attic prose, the human warmth, sympathy, insight of the account of George Sand, the lucid and unfaltering discrimination between what is meretricious and what is for all time in the poetry of Heine.

It must be remembered finally that the works of this humanist and critic come to us under the heaviest of all literary disadvantages. From the

point of view of vision and wisdom, of tolerance and breadth, it has, no doubt, been of the highest service to him to be a Jew and a Dane. But who, as he once asked not without a touch of bitterness, reads Danish? The English translations are accurate enough, but both slack and pedestrian. There can be little doubt but that, in their original tongue, his books display in style and structure a measure of that creative beauty which he has seen so clearly in the works of others, with which, in the books of so many poets in so many lands he has lived so closely and so long.

MARTIN BUBER

I

WHEREVER on the continent of Europe Jews are deeply concerned over the character and fate of their people, the name of Martin Buber is a power. Nor have non-Jews been able to escape the magic of that prophetic and persuasive voice. For Buber, though an extremely brilliant modern stylist, a perfectly equipped thinker and linguist, is either a shocking anachronism or almost a miracle. "Lore exists to be learned," he writes, "and the path exists to be trodden." We are not likely to see Mr. Chesterton become either a great warrior or a great saint; Mr. Shaw, I suspect, would always have found a marvelously clever and elegant excuse for not helping to man the barricades. We know how the majority of pacifists become mildly belligerent under the shadow of war; none of our academic negrophiles has risked life or limb at a lynching party.

This comfortable duality of the moral consciousness, this antithesis between conviction and action,

is what Martin Buber calls the life of sin. This, above all, is what he calls an un-Jewish life. He understands both literally and passionately the Jewish martyrs who have in so many ages died without a murmur to sanctify the ineffable Name. The purpose and the aim have changed. The spirit of inner unity which cannot but choose death —this spirit Buber proclaims as the native spirit of Judaism which is called upon in this age, as it has been called upon before in the course of history, to redeem not only Israel but the nations.

II

To understand the reach and depth of Martin Buber's doctrine and attitude it is necessary to learn something of his origin, which is also the origin of his approach to all ultimate questions. He comes of an old Chassidic family. His grandfather was the last of the great Zaddikim. Here, in America, it is doubtless necessary to add that the Jewish sect of Chassidim sprang up in Podolian and Volhynian villages during the first half of the eighteenth century. Its founder, to whom the faithful gave the name of Baal Shem, or Master

of the Name, was a certain Rabbi Israel ben Elieser who died in 1760. The disciples of the Baal Shem to whom were passed on his doctrine and his spirit became known as the Zaddikim, or holy ones. The most eminent of these was the Rabbi Dov Baer, popularly known as the "great Maggid," or preacher; the last concerning whom and whose words a literature of legend and aphorism arose was the Rabbi Nachmann of Bratzlav, who was born in 1771 and died in 1810. Between the death of the Baal Shem and that of Rabbi Nachmann Chassidism produced a series of personalities whose legends and sayings belong with the legend and sayings of Jesus and of Gautama to the supreme memorials of human religious experience.

These facts which are now known in their true aspect to many were threatened with oblivion or long obscurity until Martin Buber wrote his three incomparable volumes on the legends of the Baal Shem, on the great Maggid and his disciples and on the stories of Rabbi Nachmann. A great deal of his material came to Buber through direct oral tradition. But the larger part he gathered from chap-books and broadsides, written in Hebrew or Yiddish, in which ardent Chassidim of various

periods had recorded the lives and sayings of the teachers whom they loved.

Buber has reshaped his material. He has dropped the non-essential; he has emphasized the significant; he has wrought the shaft from the stone. But he has added nothing and changed nothing. He has conceived of himself as but another in the line of Chassidic chroniclers to whom time and his own nature have added the gifts of speech and form. He is the evangelist of the last great religious movement not only of Jewry, but in the world. His records have added that movement to literature and to the spiritual possessions of mankind.

III

The content of Chassidism, like the content of every great religious renewal, was an appeal from the letter to the spirit. The Zaddikim, no more than the Cabalists, no more than Jesus and the Essenes, came to abrogate or to destroy the law. They came to fulfill it in a spiritual and transcendent sense. Their reaction against the cold formalism of the rabbis was but the smallest part of

their aim. But they conceived of Rabbinism as having fallen a prey to the moral dualism of the nations. To them the scrupulous fulfillment of the six hundred and thirteen laws did not suffice, did not, indeed, begin to touch the secret of life. For the *Mitzwoth*, however sincerely practiced, remained objective. And so between practicer and practice there arose a state of dualism. Nor was this all. Beyond the fulfillment of the law there lay, in rabbinical usage and custom, the tracts of the secular life, not theoretically but actually untouched by the divine. And in this fact the Zaddikim perceived another dualism.

In them burned the old Jewish fire of unity—unity within, unity between God and his world. The whole of life was to be sanctified, God was to be expressed at every moment and in every action, the "evil impulse" was to be spiritualized and used. The offending hand was not to be cut off, but to be used, in its very offending, to bring to earth the torches of the sky. Redemption (*Kavana*) was to be achieved by the rapture (*Hitlahabut*) that fuses all of a man with God, by humility (*Shiflut*), above all, by love.

By love that is loving-kindness: "Upon a mid-

night as Rabbi Meshe Leib was absorbed in the mysteries of the law, there came a knocking at his window. Without stood a drunken peasant desiring shelter and lodging. For a moment the heart of the Zaddik was hot with anger and said to him: 'What insolence in a drunken lout and what business has he in my house?' But the righteous one answered unto his heart: 'And what business has he in God's world? If God can endure him, how dare I refuse?' And at once he opened the door and prepared a couch."

By love that is justice: "The wife of Rabbi Wolf of Zbaras accused her maidservant of having broken a costly vessel. The girl denied the deed. The woman, being wroth, prepared herself to go out and appeal to the rabbinical court. Rabbi Wolf, seeing her preparations, put on his Sabbath garment also. His wife said that it was not fitting for him to go, too, and that she knew well enough how to bear herself in the court's presence. 'Truly,' replied the Zaddik, 'you do. But the poor orphan, your maid, as whose counsel I am going, does not. And who but I will see that justice is done her?' "

By love that is spiritual discrimination: "Rabbi

Simcha Bunan was wont to say: 'When on the Sabbath day my room is full of people, I find it hard to interpret the law. For each man needs his own law and needs to be perfected therein and what I interpret for all I withdraw from each.'"

The Zaddikim were not concerned whether a man did one thing rather than another. Decisive was the intention and spirit, the aim of the action, the inner wholeness which it expressed. Each man was to live so that he himself could be a *Thora,* a law, and all his walk and conversation a *Thora.* Hence during its great and unregenerate days Chassidism taught that "within the human world there is no division between high and low. The highest lies open to each soul, every life has access to the essential; every type of character has its eternal rights; for each thing there leads some way to God and every way that leads to God is *the* way."

Wholeness within, unity between man and God, the immediate expression in individual and useful action of this wholeness and this unity, the consequent sanctification of all of life, such was the method of Chassidism. Its aim was identical with the aim of the prophets, the Essenes, the pre-Pauline Jewish followers of Jesus: the establish-

ment of a holy community here, now, in this world, in this generation. . . .

IV

I have already indicated in the last sentence how Martin Buber, starting with the Chassidic movement, worked his way up the long stream of Jewish history and discovered what he has called "secret Judaism" or "submerged Judaism," the spirit and the ethos at the root of our national character. This spirit and this ethos flamed forth in the patriarchs, in the prophets, in the Essenes and Jesus. During the Diaspora it was driven underground by both assimilative and defensive forces. The hedge about the law kept it out too. But always its secret power broke through in mystic and Cabalist and warped saint of the *Galuth*. Once only in modern times, in the Chassidic movement, it swept through millions. It, according to Buber, is the saving power. His hope for the redemption of Israel today lies in a rebirth, in a form suited to this age, of that eternal Jewish attitude to God and man.

This "secret Judaism" which, I think, it would be more clarifying to call fundamental Jewish

psychology, is embodied by Buber in three doctrines or attitudes, which he calls the principles of Unity, of Action, of the Future.

The Jew desires to be at one with himself and with God. He desires, in other words, to live harmoniously in the infinite. A division between conviction and action, an antithesis between belief and practice, between his vision of the sum of things and his expression of that vision in life—this is to the Jew sin, despair, and destruction. He cannot understand it in others; if he imitates it he becomes unspeakably corrupted. He is the slave of the absolute. His God is absolute. The moral command issuing from within is absolute.

The essence of this psychology is, of course, that it can never remain a theory. It must issue in action. The Jew *must* die to sanctify the ineffable Name or to defend the defenseless or to fight for a cause he has embraced. Inner unity must lead to action. "Lore exists to be learned and the path exists to be trodden." To believe and not to do is unthinkable. Inner unity cannot but bear the fruit of deeds.

Unity is the inner state, action its result, the future its aim. And that future, however shot through with dreams and visions, is not heavenly,

not extra-mundane, even as Javeh is either flame and leader on Horeb or immanent spirit of the world-process as in Spinoza. The future is the holy community of love and justice, the Messianic kingdom upon earth. It may be called the "latter days" when "out of Zion shall go forth the law"; it may be called a time when "the nations shall come from the ends of the earth" to Jehovah; it may be called the Socialist state or simply the state of the future. It may be proclaimed by prophets in Israel or by men like Ferdinand Lasalle, who repudiate their Jewishness but cannot escape the instincts of their blood—the instincts that demand unity within, the expression of conviction in action, the work for the Messianic kingdom. Name, age, philosophy, all these may change. The groundwork of Jewish character remains.

I have deliberately simplified Buber's ideas. He is both mystic and metaphysician. He has seen the path of his people in ecstatic vision; he has derived it from his profound and subtle reasoning concerning the nature of things. He has made clear the Jewish way by comparing it to the way of redemption taught in the Upanishads and by Lao-tse and by the great mystics of Christendom.

But to me and, I imagine, to others like me, it is more fruitful to consider Buber's doctrines not as pointing out a way that is holy, but rather as a statement of those constant elements in Jewish psychology and experience which explain the past and may guide the future.

Two concepts with which he is constantly working may be briefly commented. One is the concept of *Verwirklichung*, of realization. The universe is dynamic. It and God too are a becoming. Action proceeding out of inner oneness is action in the direction of that becoming, action that embodies God, that proclaims and produces the ineffable Oneness. . . .

The other concept is that of *Unbedingtheit*, of unconditionedness, of absoluteness. The sinner, the dualist, is the man *bedingt*, conditioned by outer fear or inner sloth, by prudence or the lust for advantage or the desire to conciliate. The saving action is an action depending on nothing but inner unity, the pure fire of convincedness and love. . . .

V

I have said that it is most fruitful to consider Buber's doctrines as statements of constant ele-

ments in Jewish psychology and experience. These, as he has pointed out, cannot be overlaid, far less obliterated, by assimilation, by coöperation in the civilizations of the West, by national apostasy itself. As an American, an Englishman, a German, the typical Jew functions with the instincts of his blood toward Unity, Action, the Future. . . . Long before I had read Buber or, in fact, many Jewish books of any kind, I berated what in those days I called the moral dualism of the Anglo-Saxon, never dreaming that the Anglo-Saxon acted out of other ancestral instincts, out of another instinctive attitude toward the sum of things, and that it was I, a Jew, who did not understand. So I wrote before I knew of Buber of the strange loyalty to objects of no absolute value, and of many other things that clashed with my thirst for unconditionedness, wholeness, the immediate oneness of conviction and action. . . . And at least twice in life—once to defend the unjustly accused, as I thought, once to flee from an influence clearly evil to a source of enduring good—I broke without a scruple, without imagining that I could have a scruple, conventions, taboos, the law itself, risking livelihood and good repute. . . . Nothing else seemed possible, nothing else conceivable. I never

thought of these actions in terms of ethical nomenclature. They were quite instinctive. They were Jewish. Of a permanent division between conviction and action and the consequent inner dualism I should have perished. . . .

I have said these personal things in the hope of illuminating, by a direct appeal to experience, the power and pertinence of Buber's ideas. He summons the Jews of the world to self-recollection through their immemorial instincts for inner unity, for salvation through action, for the realization of God and good on earth. . . . He summons mankind to partake of these ideals which belonged not only to the prophets of the kingdom, but also to that Jewish teacher who declared that no man can serve two masters, and who likened all who heard his sayings and did them not to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.

AN UNKNOWN POET

A FRIEND who suspected the miracle but wasn't quite sure brought him to our apartment in Vienna one evening in the early fall. It was, whatever the result, a difficult situation. Good literature does somehow, I said to myself, manage to get itself published. Hadn't a Viennese publisher handed me just the other day a new volume of lyrics by a man in whose future he had faith? It seemed superficially to speak against Dr. Ernst Waldinger that his two collections of verse were, for the present, hopelessly in manuscript. With what polite lies was I to save my face if the stuff proved immature or conventional? If, on the other hand, we were in the presence of the miracle, how was I to endure the poet's modesty of demeanor in the presence of the foreign and supposedly arrived man of letters? For the Viennese are a modest and a gentle folk. Amid the ruin of their land and city they go on producing more beautiful things in all the arts than the dwellers in any other place on earth. Yet they are strangely

humble before the representatives of the peoples whom they think of as strong and victorious.

The poet proved to be slim and unobtrusive. He was the more shrinking because he had been almost mortally wounded and shell-shocked during the war. For months he had lain unconscious and dumb. A strange lisp had remained; he still hid a shattered hand. But from beneath his shrinking demeanor there came to us something sweet and indomitable and incorruptible. It was clear to me almost at once why he worked in a kinsman's mercantile establishment to earn bread for a wife and child; why he was allied to none of the various local literary groups or circles, why he knew no one in his native city. He couldn't ply the trade of letters. Since it never occurred to him that he could subordinate his duties as a man to his success as a poet, it was equally clear that he hadn't quite literally the time to call on editors or make appointments to meet people in the Café Central or Herrenhof or ingratiate himself with those editorial powers and principalities who operate precisely in Vienna with a good deal of social elegance and formality. He was closely allied by marriage with at least one Viennese of the highest international fame and with an Austro-Ameri-

can family of both wealth and distinction. I had but to look into Ernst Waldinger's eyes to understand his noble inability to press his claims either upon the very great man, absorbed, old, in uncertain health, or upon the American kinsmen who, though intelligent and kindly and generous, were thinking of everything else rather than of the severest of the Muses. . . .

I begged him to honor us by reading a few poems. He sat down on a couch, half-turned away, shading his eyes a little. His voice was low but sonorous; the lisp almost disappeared. He read, like all poets, with heavy emphasis on the musical values of his verses. Without physically raising or lowering his voice he brought to our ears the resonance of thunder:

"Aus goldnem Hämmern und aus Brunnenrauschen,"

and the song of flutes and soft recorders:

"Du Flöte des Geschicks, du schwebst als glitte
Ein zartes Vogellied durch blaue Mitte."

He read a poem called "L'antichambre"—

"Wie viele Zeit verbringen wir vor Türen—"

into which he had poured forever all the hesitancy and pain and pride and humiliation and despair

and reassertion of the free self of all noble spirits who have had to be suppliants because they could never sink to the level of those outside whose doors they waited; he read a sonnet, "Unto us a son is born. . . ."

"Mayest thou have music loftier than our own,
Thou whose sweet eyes our ecstasy once bred;
Then wilt thou hear the hours' more patient tread
And with thy aspiration be at one.
Though many a flower must wither ere 'tis blown,
And many a goodly fruit unripe lie dead,
None ever came but in a saviour's stead.
Mayest thou have music loftier than our own.

The somber burden which to thee we brought
Forgive thy parents and their hapless race!
Keep nothing of them but their yearning's grace
And guard it tenderly as they did not,
That or from discord or accordant tone
Thou mayest hear music loftier than their own."

Only he did not read this conventional verbiage into which I have forced his lovely spontaneity and packed significance. He read:

"Dass du Musik hast über uns hinaus,
Süssblickender . . . "

He read, above all:

"Doch keiner kam, der nicht zum Heil geboren . . ."

He fell silent amid the shadows of his corner on the couch, still shading his eyes, still hiding his wounded hand.

He must have noticed our emotion in the hush. He explained very simply that he had written a group of poems in which he had tried to interpret the inner significance of certain great forms by analogous creative acts within his own art. Thus he read us "Fugue"—swift, resonant stanzas concerning a tone that, rising from the silence of deep midnights, is married to sister tones and reaches finally the throne of ultimate mystery: he read us "Arabesques"—the breathless, inconceivably swift interlacement of sinuous *terze rime;* he read us "The Tower"—a magnificent pæan of all the unconquerable aspirations of mankind:

> Alle Ekstasen sollst du uberstürmen,
> Allen Gebeten, die seufzen, beschwören,
> Gib die Gestalt und lass sie sich türmen,
> Steinerne Orgel zu brandenden Chören!

He read us finally his epilogue and confession of faith: "Of Strong Humility." He who regards the universe with true piety holds nothing to be of small account; to him who reverences all life all things yield up their secrets. True love and faith purge the wild senses of terror and identify the

soul in joy with the self-contemplative creativeness of God. All men are thus at one and equal in a glow like a still fire within the heavenly crystal; they are in the shadow of a spirit that manifests itself in all phenomena alike; they are members of a community divine by its very nature and sustaining the least and most fearful of its creatures. Thus in the strength of humility the circle of creation rejoices, knowing itself and all its works obedient to the ultimate command:

> Und in der Demut Stärke
> Frohlockt der Schöpfungskreis,
> Der sich und seine Werke
> Dem Sinn gehorsam weiss.

These poems were all from Dr. Waldinger's earlier manuscript collection: *Die Berufung.* He was good enough later to give me a copy of his more recent work: "Gras Zwischen den Steinen." This is a continuous poem of forty sections of brief cantos, each section or canto consisting of seven stanzas. The form is severe and highly symmetrical, relying for variety upon the change of subject, mood, and inner music. The theme of the entire poem is the poet's boyhood and adolescence in Vienna. It shares with all first-rate literature the quality of being universal by virtue of its very

concreteness. In those etched scenes of home and street and school the humblest, at times the most sordid, details are—while remaining precisely what life makes them—lifted into the eternal world of the interpretative imagination. I cannot clear the barriers of language and convey any just notion of this poem. I have read it again and again in the carbon copy which Dr. Waldinger gave me. It moves me more each time, not less. I rank it in my own mind with Dehmel's "Zwei Menschen," with William Ellery Leonard's "Two Lives," with that brief series of works, beginning with "Modern Love," in which, after so long and painful a divorce, verse and life, music and reality, high imagination and concrete experience, are married once again.

Waldinger is barely thirty. I cannot find the influence of any older poet in his verse except perhaps a slight tinge of Rilke in his earliest poems. What distinguishes him is, I take it, a union of precise fidelity to fact with plasticity of contour and musical resonance of texture. He describes, for example, a teacher in a school who overawes his pupils. To them he seems detached, noble, a superior being. The poor man is, in fact, pursued into his very class-room by sordid and domestic

cares. At night he tries to flee from life by writing shoddy verses. Waldinger makes us feel the feelings of the small boys; next he makes us see as with the eyes of the body the humble and unhappy pedagogue. And the poem is as severe as a canto of Dante and as rich in vowel-music as a sonnet of Rossetti, and yet there blows through it a bleak wind of modern life and we know the brown, stained class-room and the man and his wife and the wretched little flat and the evening-lamp there by which the teacher writes his verses. . . .

It is months ago since Ernst Waldinger did me the honor of giving me his manuscripts. I do not know whether he has found a publisher. He probably thinks that I, like others whom I begged him to approach, am afflicted with what he once called "sloth of the heart" (*Trägheit des Herzens*). The truth is that I have had many qualms of conscience. But life is imperious in its demands. I have had nearer duties than that of speaking a word, ineffectual enough, for the marvelous poet who by chance came up my stairs one day. Also the history of literature persuades me to believe that such work as his cannot go permanently unnoticed and unpraised. To which he could justly reply that he needs publication and appreciation

now, that a gleam in these dim and penurious years would do more for him, more, therefore, for poetry, than all the possible plaudits of a future when "he may be indifferent and cannot enjoy them; when he may be solitary and cannot impart them. . . ." The unforgettable words of Johnson embody the recurrent tragedy of the creative artist. Mindful of those words I have written this perhaps too personal and certainly quite inadequate account of my unknown poet. Even amid the clamorous business of the world it may be seen by a few who are not wholly unmindful of things precious and permanent.

Part Six: Cities and Men

For
THELMA
dear comrade of my travels
and my life

CATULLUS IN VERONA

WERE those the Capulets and Montagues brawling beneath our window? Almost all night hoarse and excited voices rose from the narrow street under the pointed arches of the half Venetian doorways. Perhaps the Veronese are still a quarrelsome folk; perhaps they were only taking a natural delight, after a manner of their own, in the soft night of stars over their enchanted city.

The brilliant morning was peaceful enough. On the obligatory Piazza Vittorio Emanuele of every surviving Italian city people were already loitering in the cafés under the shady arches. To them the great Roman amphitheater on the northeast side of the square threw an accustomed shadow. If evening brought no rain, they might stroll in and see a variety performance or an American film from the seats whence their ancestors watched gladiatorial games. But those ancestors are remote from them not only in time. They will, of course, point out the amphitheater, the arena, to the stranger and also tell him to see the well-pre-

served *teatro romano* in its hill-garden beside the Adige. What they have at heart is the Piazza dei Signori, where, in approved Venetian fashion, the doves flutter about the modern monument of Dante, or the Piazza d'Erbe, where the Madonna Verona on her tall column still receives the vows and prayers of the simple.

The city remembers her mediæval period; it remembers the Scaligeri whose richly fretted tombs still show their intricate perfection off the Piazza dei Signori; it remembers that Can Grande who built the old castle by the river and many other strong keeps as far to the north as Malcesine on the Alpine shore of the Lago di Garda, who, above all, offered a first refuge to the great Florentine poet driven into exile. It remembers, too, its not inglorious later period of Venetian dominance when the winged lion was lifted to his column on the Piazza d'Erbe, when the great palaces were built, and Pietro, the painter, assuming the name of his city, made it more illustrious throughout Italy and the world. Of these periods and names the monuments, as enduring as brass, remain. Why should the Veronese remember him whom I sought, for whose sake, indeed, I had come here—the poet in a long archaic dialect to whose birth

and habitation no legend or tradition points? Nor have the foreign lovers of the city remembered him. To them Verona has been a Shakespearean scene of passion and of death or, as to Rossetti, a sojourn of Dante or, as to Miss Amy Lowell, the place where stands the Castel Vecchio of Can Grande. So the Veronese have commemorated all their glories. Only not him, their earliest and, indeed, their only poet, that Caius Valerius Catullus who because he was rightly called Veronensis first raised their city from obscurity.

It is a pity. For the Veronese have a talent for commemoration. Off the Piazza d'Erbe in a narrow, crowded street stands a gaunt and ancient house once splendid, but now a dwelling-place of the poor. Under an arched doorway you enter a spacious courtyard. There are stables here now and the women of the people hang their drying linen from the balconies. But the arches remain and the balconies. And over the great doorway is one of the tenderest and most exquisite inscriptions in the world: *Queste furono le case dei Capuleti d'onde usci la Giulietta per cui tanto piansero i cuori gentili e i poeti canterono.* How beautiful that is, and how far in time and color if not in

mood from the poet for some trace of whom I was searching.

Remoter from him still is the lovely Piazza dei Signori with the Venetian columns and arcades of its palaces—the Palazzo della Ragione and the Palazzo del Consiglio—one of the loveliest squares, in fact, in all Italy, tranquil yet not devoid of life, small enough to fill the eye at once with the unstudied symmetry of its thousand graces. And remote from my poet with a complete spiritual alienation which I share, the old chapel of the Scaligeri, the S. Maria antica in which, doubtless, the hooded Dante stood meditating on the circles of hell in which the wicked were to be cast.

I was quite ready to give up my seeking. But we went, as in duty bound, to the garden of the Palazzo Giusti, climbing up the sheer hillside with its incredibly ancient, dark, and shapely cypresses, with statues standing, as they should, out in the sun and rain, statues probably of a late Roman period, yet belonging, after all, to the world in which Catullus lived and moved. Descending the hill-garden on the left, moreover, and passing the statues in their niches along that sunny left wall, I saw upon an almost wholly obliterated Roman slab the words: *P. Valerius. . . . filio.*

. . . No doubt it is my ignorance of classical archæology that made me stop with a beating heart. No doubt the stone and inscription are too late to have anything to do with that original Valerian *gens* of Verona from which Catullus sprang. But it was something to have seen, at least, this late shadow of my poet's name here in his native city. And if anyone doubt the exactness of my observation, let him, on being admitted by the gardener to the Giusti garden, turn immediately to the left until he comes upon the statue of Bacchus in the first niche of the left wall and then follow the wall until he reaches the Roman slab that bears the poet's family name. He will be rewarded, too, by the delicious inscription under the statue of Bacchus which I copied on the spot: *Ambulator, ne trepides, Baccum amatorem non bellatorem ad Genium loci Dominus P.*

The failure of the Veronese to commemorate their great poet may, of course, be due to a vague impression which one meets elsewhere too, that his connection with the city is not certain and definite in character. That impression is wholly unfounded. If no other evidence existed it would suffice to read once more the hendecasyllabic lines in which Catullus begs the paper on which he is

writing to tell Cæcilius, that jolly friend of his and tender poet, to leave other haunts and come to Verona:

> Poetae tenero, meo sodali,
> Velim Cæcilio, papyre, dicas:
> Veronam veniat.

The tone makes it perfectly clear that Catullus wanted Cæcilius to visit him at *his* home, at Verona. And that he was indeed a Veronese was accepted by his successors in Latin literature as a fact universally known. "Mantua," says Ovid, "delights in her Virgil, Verona in her Catullus." Martial confirms this tradition that once, at least, Catullus was not without honor in the city of his birth. "Verona," he declared, "loves the measures of her learned bard"—

> Verona docti syllabas amat vatis.

And all the Latin poets, including Horace, call Catullus learned, for it was he who, despite Horace's too inclusive boast, first "transferred the song of the Greeks to Italian measures" and actually translated a song of Sappho and the brilliant "Coma Berenices" of Callimachus. I need not add out of my little knowledge that the elder Pliny too speaks of Catullus as a Veronese and that the late

Ausonius, quoting in his own verse the first line of Catullus's first poem, adds: "As a certain Veronese poet remarks"—

Veronensis ait poeta quondam.

It is not without reason that one looks for some trace of Catullus in that city of so much later but, to my way of thinking, much lesser glory before seeking memories of him beside that "limpid lake" with which his name is forever connected.

We followed the route indicated in Tennyson's rather honeyed verses. One no longer rows but motors from Desenzano to Sirmione, the *venusta Sirmio* of Catullus, the "gem of islands and of almost islands," the "pæninsularum insularumque ocelle" of the immortal verses. Hither Catullus came from his arduous journeyings in the East; hither to the villa that was home to him, that he greeted in lines which express once and forever a rooted and eternal human feeling. "Oh what is more blessed than when, all cares laid aside, our mind puts down its burden and, tired of toil and wandering, we come to our own hearthstone and rest ourselves on our long-yearned-for couch!"

O quid solutis est beatius curis,
cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino

labore fessi venimus Larem ad nostrum,
desideratoque adquiescimus lecto.

The whole Sirmio poem, as well as that of Tennyson, is dutifully engraved on the walls of the veranda of the Grand Hotel Sirmione, which is not grand at all; but I saw no eye seeking the inscriptions except an occasional lack-luster one. Below the veranda the Lago di Garda stretches its blue expanse dotted with the orange sails of the fishermen's boats, and quite near the hotel, more grateful to the tourist mind than memories of a poet dead two thousand years, rises the dour and warlike keep of the Scaligeri with moat and walls and archers' stations extending far out into the lake, intact and formidable still.

One leaves the castle not unwillingly behind and, passing through the cramped alleys and under the crumbling arches of an indescribably picturesque fishing village, strikes out upon the sunny, winding road which measures the whole length of the peninsula. From sparse groves emerge here and there pink villas in the worst modern Italian style. But soon these disappear, too, and one reaches, through a little wood of pines, the extreme point of the peninsula. Here the lake is radiant on three sides—sapphire merging into

chrysoprase; here one stands as, so profoundly, one should stand, in the midst of an olive orchard. The silvery leaves twinkle in the light breeze. An old man, barefoot, severe of countenance, digs the weeds from the roots of the old, contorted olive trees. One stands very still and hears, above the sighing of the breeze at one's ear, the lapping and murmuring of the water—the laughter of the Lydian waves of the lake which greeted the home-coming of the poet long ago. But where are the ruins of the reputed villa of Catullus which the natives here glibly call Grotto di Catullo? And why *grotto?*

Going to the very edge of the peninsula, one discovers its point here to be a cliff which falls sheer, about thirty feet, at the northern tip, but slopes gently and gradually on the western side. And on this slope the ruins come in view at once: massive Roman arches of brick through which the lake glitters now, tall chambers still partly roofed. The marble quarried from this very cliff is gone; the mosaic pavements are replaced by grasses, by blue flowers, by the scarlet trembling poppies.

The ruins, closely examined, prove to be those of a great house or, probably, those of a great house and a somewhat smaller one a hundred feet

farther left. Of the smaller villa a few square feet of mosaic pavement remain. The situation of either—if my guess of there having been two be correct—corresponds precisely with Catullus's description of the lake, of his house, of the very winds that blew upon it. Was the great house his? He was never rich; he was often in actual straits. He tells his friend Fabullus, on the occasion of an invitation to dine, that he has been hard up so long that the spiders spin their webs in his poor little purse (*"tui Catulli plenus sacculus est aranearum"*); his verses to Cicero have a tang of the bitterness, the self-irony of a sensitive spirit wounded by the necessity of receiving favors. Perhaps it was the great house that exhausted his narrow means; perhaps the smaller one was his. It matters little. For no bit of marble remains that his hand might have touched and only that bit of pavement which might have been trodden by his foot. But on this exquisite bit of earth he walked and rested and suffered and meditated some of the greatest lyrical poetry in all literature.

Here by these arches, among the poppies that run to the edge of the lake, I thought over the poems that I have known and loved so long. The famous show passages are not the best. Though

it must be remembered that Catullus first struck that deep, grave Roman note on human mortality —"*nox est perpetua una dormienda*—"

> Let us live, my Lesbia, let us love!
> Let us heed not old men's jeering cries.
> Lo, the suns may wane in heaven above,
> But the morning finds them in the skies.
> We alone, when sets our little light,
> We must sleep through an eternal night;

though he struck that note first, yet it came as spontaneously from Horace, whose "*pulvis et umbra sumus*" is even more celebrated.

No, this formal splendor of poetic speech is not the best of Catullus. It is almost part of the Latin language, and you will find it occasionally even in Seneca and Claudian. But Catullus, early as he came, perhaps because the language was still more fluid, made of the stately Latin an incomparable instrument of tenderness, of scorn, of passion, and of yearning. He had a high laconic note, too: "*Sed haec prius fuere*"; or the famous "*odi et amo*" with its far more remarkable conclusion: "*fieri sentio et excrucior.*" But at his most characteristic a human voice cries out to us as no other from the long roll of Latin verse:

> Fulsere vere candidi tibi soles!

How clear the sound of the voice is in the little halting word *vere,* like a catch in the throat; how clear it is in the concentrated despair of that last cry over the faithless Clodia: "*Caeli, Lesbia illa, Lesbia nostra . . .*"; how deep and earnest it sounds in its declaration of an almost modern and romantic attitude toward the object of the poet's passion: "*Dilexi tum te, non tantum ut vulgus amicam . . .*" and in the whole of the eternally fresh, deep, and pertinent "*Jucundum, mea vita.*"

The Lesbia poems are, of course, the best known. They have the lyrical cry, they have those sudden exact and speaking images that are so rare in the poetry of the ancients: "Like the farthest flower of the meadow after it has been touched by the passing plough"—

velut prati
ultimi flos, prætereunte postquam
tactus aratro est.

Less often remembered are Catullus's moments of high and gallant imaginative vision:

Ad claras Asiæ volemus urbes;

less often his humor and irony as in the poem on the affected Arrius or the grinning Egnatius with its terse and whiplike

nam risu inepto res ineptior nulla est;

least often the imaginative power and soaring music of the two great marriage odes which Ben Jonson and Herrick loved to imitate.

What was most characteristic of him, as it is of every poet, is his rhythm, his inner music, which, beyond the formalities of meter, is the authentic voice of his genius. And whether he used the too tripping hendecasyllables or the, in itself, unlovely *scazon* or limping measure, or the Sapphic stanza which has, on his lips, not yet the suave Horatian perfection, we hear a tragic rapture of sheer song unmatched save by the very greatest of the lyrical poets, ancient or modern, who came after him. Read his elegiac couplets and then those of Ovid and the difference is clear. The verses of Catullus are the very music of human longing and of human grief. The later poet's are mellifluous exercises by comparison. Nor did Catullus miss, as lesser lyrists have often done, the great thunder and organ music of verse. Only he combined it in the tumultuous galliambics of the "Atys" with wild and mystical reverberations, with the haunting cries of primitive and unheard-of things. But I know in all literature no more consummate music than that of

ubi cymbalum sonat vox, ubi tympana reboant,

or of

Dea magna, dea Cybele, dea domina Dindymi. . . .

We were almost alone among the ruins by those Lydian waves. The few other people who loitered there had come to bathe and because Italy is cheap. It was the falling lira that brought them hither. These ruins were like any other ruins to them. There are so many, anyhow. I turned back reluctantly to the grove of olives. How often is the shade of the poet appeased here in his old dwelling-place by any true thought of him? How often? But we, too, had to go from the lake and the poppies and the ruins of his house and bid his shade, as he once bade his brother's, an eternal farewell:

atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale!

VIENNESE VARIATIONS

I

A SHORT broad street lined with charming shops is still called Am Graben, By the Moat, because here actually stood the turbid water that guarded the camp in which Marcus Aurelius wrote a portion of the *Meditations*. Facts like that leave me comparatively unmoved. The *Meditations* are remote enough and are overshadowed for me by the character of the emperor's mission beside the Danube. In a very great war he defeated the Parthians and Germans and went back to Rome and dedicated to Antoninus Pius, in memory of these victories, the triumphal column which is still to be seen in the Piazza Colonna with a sonorous Latin inscription that I am paraphrasing here. And on the other side of the column you may read another Latin legend which tells you that Sixtus V, Pontifex Maximus, rededicated this monument, having caused it to be cleansed of all impiety—*ab omni impietate expurgatam*—to Saint Paul, the Apostle, whose gilded statue the Pope had placed

on the heathen monument's top. The imperator who thought that killing people was a fine thing that required a monument and the Pope who thought that the monument was impious not because it commemorated murder but because its builder didn't believe in a set of rather shoddy myths—neither of these picturesque barbarians touch either my mind or my heart. . . . Much more important to mankind is the shop of the Wiener Werkstaette on the Graben. The glass and fabrics there, the design of the wrought brass and silver are the flowering of the skilled hands and pious minds of many generations of craftsmen dedicated to beauty and serviceableness and peace. . . . Strolling to the right from that matchless shop you reach the corner of the famous Kaerntnerstrasse and the Stefansdom arises before you with a hushed and contrite sweetness of aspiration which one misses, for all their elaborate and mystic grandeur, in the loftier cathedrals of France.

Vienna is, of course, unthinkable without the Stefansdom. But except to the more stupid among the common people, the intelligent Viennese workers being Socialists, or to some fading remnants of the aristocracy, the Cathedral is not a religious monument. It is, so to speak, the pivot of

the city's visual beauty; it is the center from which the old town radiates. Regarding it from any point of the lovely Platz, preferably from the windows of the Churhauskeller where the food is the best in Europe, what one thinks of is Grillparzer and his famous saying concerning the tower. And with that thought the way to Vienna is found —not to the Roman camp or the Mediæval wall or the imperial residence or to the scene of alarms and persecutions and rumors of war. . . . Vienna has those old, unhappy, far-off things in common with all the wretched and tragic cities of men. . . . No, with that thought you have found your way home to the city to which Mozart came from that bare, pathetic house in Salzburg, to which Beethoven came from the Rhine and Brahms and Hebbel from the far North and men and women from lands farther and stranger and all stayed there for the rest of their lives or dreamed and hoped and wished to stay. . . .

II

The baroque monuments do not annoy me. Not that I am fond of baroque. In Rome its floridness struck me as disagreeably emphatic. And perhaps

I am quite wrong in feeling about many of the seventeenth-century sculptures in Vienna an undertone of irony, of the sculptor's sense of the latent absurdity of the style he was using. I may simply be influenced by the open and delightful fun that Messerschmidt put into his busts. Or perhaps the city has the felicity of softening and mellowing even those fleshy nymphs and gigantic Tritons. What, looking down the Kohlmarkt from the Graben, one has a deep sense of is not the huge baroque groups that flank the gates of the Hofburg, but the gray memoried court within the castle and the quiet gardens beyond with that unassuming distinction that seems to hover over them, and the sweep, again so gracious and without false emphasis, of the Ringstrasse with the museums before one and the statue of Goethe at one's left.

Unassuming distinction and unemphatic grace are the notes of the city. Consider that spacious tract of the Ringstrasse where the Parliament and Town-Hall on the one side face the Burgtheater on the other. The Town-Hall is mediæval Flemish, the Parliament building is Greco-Roman, the Burgtheater is Renaissance. Each is superb in its own style. But there should be a clashing and confusion of styles. There is, in fact, no clash.

The personality of the city softens contrasts. The modern Gothic Votivkirche at one end of the Ring is not as authentic and as charming as the Schwarzenberg palace and square at the other end. But all these spots and buildings and monuments are saved for beauty by a quietude in the atmosphere, an unselfconscious grace. Vienna is neither gesticulatory nor humble. Hers is a grace that has grown as leaves grow on a tree. The Place de la Concorde blows its trumpets—trumpets of gold, no doubt—beside the violins of Vienna's squares and gardens. The city has some incommunicable secret in its heart.

You do not come upon that secret, I think, either in the lovely little square about the Minoritenkirche bordered by gray, soft streets that bear the names of Petrarca and Metastasio nor in the altogether noble interior of the small Lichtenstein palace behind the Hofburg gardens, though that interior represents perhaps the finest example in Europe of the eighteenth century's ability to unite hushed splendor with curbed grace. You approach the secret, perhaps, by keeping an image of these things in your mind and then leaving them. Leaving them to pass through the ugly and noisy Waehringerstrasse and reaching thus the suburbs

which the Viennese amusingly call "Cottage." The suburbs are modern and not all the villas and cottages are pleasing to the eye. But in these green streets—Hasenauerstrasse, Sternwartegasse, Hochschulstrasse—you are suddenly aware of the fact that the grace and distinction of Vienna are here as truly as in her historic monuments and buildings. Folk and landscape—the secret is there. From Hasenauerstrasse you enter the hilly park the name of which commemorates the fact that once Turks and Saracens besieged Vienna. In the park stand the varied dark, slender, self-contained fir trees of the Alpine countryside—Tannen, Fichten, Foehren—and the eye seeks the shadowy mountains of the horizon and one remembers the firs on their native mountains at Hinterbruehl where Beethoven wrote his Missa Solemnis and a drive thence through the hill villages which stopped suddenly—for with beating heart one called to the driver—at number 26 Bruenngasse in the village of Perchtoldsdorf where a small gray house bears a simple tablet: *"In diesem Hause schuf Hugo Wolf viele unsterbliche Lieder."* A quiet house and the inscription is so quiet and matter-of-fact in tone that only on reflection you consider the boldness of the claim in that word

"unsterblich," "immortal." But Vienna can make these bold claims with a soft gesture. She need not strive and cry. She need take no thought concerning glory. Her masters are always pure. Fashions of thought change with the changing ages, opinions are "dated" in a decade, knowledge besieges continually the fortress of the conceptual word. The heart of man knows little variableness. Schubert and Wolf are secure forever.

III

Folk and landscape. The war-myth that the Viennese are not German is, of course, unworthy of notice. The historic civilization of the Germans has, in fact, its center in the south. And the German consciousness has always been heightened here by the pressure of gifted but barbaric peoples at the city's very gate. The Viennese point to the hills beyond Eisenstadt and say, "Asia begins there!" In that phrase, ironically uttered, you hear at once the pride and the steadfastness with which the Viennese have preserved their historic culture. But that very culture, by its spiritual attractiveness as well as by its influence in the west of Europe, naturally drew the finer and more

open spirits of the border lands. Hence there is a strong infusion of Hungarian, of Slavic, and of Jewish blood in the Viennese of today. But these Hungarians, Slavs, and especially these Jews, have, while preserving the *timbre* of their inner life, merged themselves with the civilization of Germanic speech and form. The form has, doubtless, become softer; the extremes of Germanic romanticism on the one hand and of stodginess on the other have been avoided. Brahms would scarcely have written his enchanting Gypsy Songs had he remained in the north. But since all populations are racial mixtures and since our knowledge of these things is so slight and uncertain, it is far safer to attribute the character of any group to continuity of historic experience within a constant scene.

Vienna is the outpost of western civilization touched despite its Germanic steadfastness by the languor of the east. When in autumn boughs appear under gables in witness of the harvesting of the vine and the people sing at the feast of the *Heurigen* or this year's vintage, there is a soft thrill in the air that is like no other in the world. The air is mild. But it comes from the mountains. For of all the great cities of the world Vienna alone is a mountain city. Paris and Berlin, Mos-

cow and Chicago, are flat as one's hand; New York withdraws itself somehow from the heights; the hills of Rome loom larger in the imagination than in fact. But from the Votivplatz you can drive to the fir-clad hills of Kobenzl in twenty minutes. Below lies the city and the crinkled Danube; on clear days the top of the Schneeberg emerges at least in outline; behind the Schlosshotel rise somber Alpine heights into the tonic air. Or else, walking easily enough along the Gersthoferstrasse out to Poetzleinsdorf, resting perhaps at a gardened inn, one can reach the heights of the villages of Sievering and Salmansdorf [1] and climb to sloping, sun-drenched upland meadows and see the famous Kahlenberg and the Leopoldsberg and be even here, amid the nobly contoured foothills, in a world enchanting and skyey. A few hours farther lies Semmering in the high Alps. Here are fir forests of dark olive and blue shadows on the eternal snow and peak towering above peak. The Schneeberg looms above; the long, gradual slope of the Sonnwendstein is there to be climbed. Above the tree line is an inn. You drink Gluehwein there and have a view of the incomparable

[1] The thorpe or village of Suleiman, another reminiscence of the Turkish wars and Vienna's outpost position.

mountains. And all this is an integral part of Vienna. Here you are likely to meet Hofmannsthal and old Hermann Bahr baring his chest to the mountain winds and yonder, in a curving snow-filled valley, stands the cottage where once Mahler wrote and where now Franz Werfel meditates his plays and poems. The city and the mountains are one—one through contrast and harmony. The city is cozy—there is no other word—because it shields you in severe weather or in bleak moods from the grandeur and the menace of the mountains. But when the sun shines and the heart feels young and adventurous, all the streets of the city race through the mountains to the sky.

IV

This is not a treatise and I disclaim all responsibility for a connection between these facts concerning folk and landscape and the present somber glory of the city. The secret of that glory may lie in these facts; it may be inaccessible to any analysis. The glory exists. The city is poor; it is, in fact, seedy. The landlords are practically expropriated; the poor suffer; banks and business houses fail, reopen, stagger, fail again; the taxes on enter-

prise and amusements are crushing. Breitner builds model tenements for the workers; one of the most distinguished citizens of Vienna, the owner of an influential and historic house, told me that he and his wife could not afford tickets to the opera. Breitner undoubtedly has his face toward the future. Our bourgeois civilization is probably played out. But in Vienna—is it a sunset glow?—that civilization is still glorious. It is still productive. Beauty wells from the city. . . .

Begin as humbly as you like. Begin with the shops. The Viennese arts and crafts, especially in the working of leather, metal, and porcelain, are *hors concours*. This applies not only to the Wiener Werkstaette. Except for the *couturiers*, Parisian workmanship, especially Parisian design, is tawdry in comparison. If taste, as some eminent critics have held, is closely allied to genius, Vienna distills her quality in these arts and crafts. And the production of these things requires obviously not only the artist who designs, but the worker who executes and who adds solidity to grace. Despite the Viennese softness you get a sense of character added to genius from the fact that what you buy in Vienna is not only charming; it is almost indestructible.

Neither war nor poverty has changed the craftsmen of Vienna. They have not extinguished the higher arts of design. In these matters I am, as my Parisian friends assure me, an incompetent judge. But I belong to so large a class of not insensitive persons who are browbeaten in this matter that I shall take courage and declare, barbarian that I am, that—other things being equal—a painting or an etching is not the worse for adding to the right and beautiful treatment of the medium an emotion or even an idea. So overwhelming is the patter of the studios that soon one will be ashamed of liking any picture the subject-matter of which is above the average painter's intelligence. I advise my fellow-barbarians to buy their etchings in Vienna. The works of Schmutzer and Pollak and their colleagues have harmony and precision; they satisfy the most exacting eye; they reach beyond the eye to the soul.

Not that the cultivation of something approaching pure art—a wretched and contradictory phrase—is inconceivable in Vienna. In his apartment at the corner of Gersthoferstrasse and Messerschmidtgasse Richard Teschner has built in his tiny marionette theater. The apartment itself is a thing of beauty. Its furnishing and decorations

have all been designed by Teschner himself. In spite of the many things that are in these rooms you never lose the sense of both spaciousness and ease. Beauty married to fitness and use is unobtrusive here, is an atmosphere and aroma. . . . At one end of the moderately sized drawing-room is the theater. It is built into the wall; it is about a yard and a half broad and a yard high. Teschner, a tall, lean monkish-looking man with an ascetic face and a thinker's forehead disappears through a tiny door beside the theater; his wholesome and amiable wife makes you comfortable in chairs that face the stage. The lights in the room go out. The little curtain is lifted. There are no figures on the stage. But within that tiny square something reaches your vision that is in its effect cosmic and takes your breath away. Are those worlds being born? Are those planets upon their march through space? Are those the fires of eternity? Golden rain drifts through the infinite . . . nebula become worlds . . . The background of this theater is the universe. Then the puppets come on. But all memories of other puppets must be dismissed. These puppets are to all other puppets what the yearnings and maladies of a modern soul are to the appetites of cavemen. The little figures

are as flexible as flesh and blood, yet with the gravity of eternity upon their faces and in their gestures. They are worthy of the background. Their pantomime breathes a severe and abstract sorrow. Craig's mythopœic theater is achieved here. If Teschner were a Frenchman he and his theater would long ago have been brought to America and smothered in dollars. But Teschner is a Viennese and the Viennese do not understand the art of self-exploitation and *réclame*. Nor the art of betraying art. "Could you rebuild your theater on a larger scale," I asked him, "so that you could have more profitable audiences?" He shook his head. "It must be so to be itself. Fifty people at a time can see it. No more." The ascetic lines in his face deepened. Mrs. Teschner laughed cheerfully at the notion of her husband making a business of his art. . . .

Reinhardt alone has been able to do that. But Reinhardt, like Richard Strauss, came to Vienna from a harder and a busier world. Nevertheless, his Theater in der Josephstadt still shares with the Guild Theater in New York its unassailable position at the head of all modern stages. And Reinhardt came first. His productions of Goldoni's "Der Diener Zweier Herrn," of Hofmannsthal's

"Der Schwierige," of Schnitzler's "Anatol," of Werfel's "Maximilian und Juarez," illustrate the source of that entire modern art of the theater which adds significant plasticity to a right imitation of nature and formal composition of color and gesture and tone to the necessary illusion of the real.

V

As in the "Tempest" there is a strumming in the air in Vienna. Over all the arts hovers music and filters into them and makes them musical. Lines and gestures are musical here. It is not because of an abstract tradition or of history grown cold. The soil of the tradition is as rich and alive as ever. In houses and apartments lawyers and physicians and business men meet in the evening and play string quartets. You will not hear jazz even at the Simplicissimus Cabaret. All this is unaffected, native, real. The recent operettas are a bit vulgarized; they still have touches of the old melancholy grace. They are not important except as export goods. Music means the Konzerthaus, the Musikverein, the Staatsoper, even the tottering and outwardly shabby Volksoper where in one season we heard more than adequate per-

formances of Weber, Wagner, Verdi, and the *première* of a work as fresh and exquisite as Walter Braunfels's "Die Vögel." Music means the Mozart performances in the Redoutensaal of the Hofburg. The hall, mirrored and hung with tapestries, has woodwork of white and gold and seats of deep crimson. The great candelabras with their thousand prisms shed a mild light as over the wild and fatal wedding of some doomed prince and princess out of a tragic legend. Here was the curbed imperial pomp now gone forever. But down those curved dignified stairs at the end whence once descended emperors and kings there now descend figures more real and lasting—those creatures of the imagination whom Mozart made immortal. The orchestra is small, as it should be. This master needs no masses of sound. But players and singers understand their Mozart. The rhythms are liquid and perfect; the melodies open like flowers; while you sit here you are sure that this is the topmost reach of human art. The romantic cry is still absent. You thank God that Mozart did not break his heart crying after the moon. . . . Or reaching out into the inscrutable. They did that soon enough. You can follow the footprints of Beethoven in Vienna; you survey the

birth-house of Schubert on a busy dispirited street. "*Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt weiss was ich leide. . . .*" Half unconsciously Goethe summed up almost all of modern music and poetry and philosophy. . . .

But music, I repeat, is not a matter of history in Vienna. It is creative experience. The great tradition has never been broken. Mahler followed Brahms and the dark face of Arnold Schoenberg is a familiar sight in the streets and concert halls today. I cannot follow some of his later works. But the contemporary is notoriously a bad judge in such matters. The reëducation of the ear is a difficult process. And I may be wrong too in seeing in the "Alkestis" of Egon Wellecz a new and impressive manner of writing compact music-drama on a tragic theme. But many types of music are contemporary in Vienna; the whole of music is alive. I have seen Korngold, pudgy and ineloquent but earnest and devoted, accompany the songs of a friend that seemed to me novel without being new, and Franz Mittler, to name one only, writes charming songs in the romantic tradition. The tall form of Richard Specht with its long-cheeked, sleepy face appears at concerts. The eminent critic and music scholar knows, judges,

records. Eyes turn to him. Music is as serious as life itself. Or the eyes turn, since even musicians must live, to Herzka, head of the great Universal-Edition, a kindly sagacious Santa-Claus of a man, who drags with a wide net and gambles on posterity and publishes even the strange monotonous chants and instrumental compositions of an ecstatic peasant like Hauer. . . . Music is life; art is free. Native-born and stranger are equally welcome. A young American soprano came to Vienna. Mittler accompanied her; Specht praised and advised her; since she showed a gift for composition, Herzka published her first group of songs. . . . The interpreters are, of course, many. There is the Rosé quartet; there is the great Lieder singer Franz Steiner. He is typical of his city. There are greater voices than his baritone. But he sings not only with his larynx; he sings with his heart and with his cultivated, trained intelligence. You hear him sing Schumann and Hugo Wolf and you know that Caruso sobbing Pagliacci is precisely fit for immortality according to Edison and Pathé. Steiner's singing has vocal beauty enough. But it is a spiritual act and a possession forever. I asked him, as I had asked Teschner, why he had never thought of an American tour. He thought

the idea pleasant but fantastic. Unaffectedly he put it from him. Art and life are more important than money. . . . The musical life of the city is unaffected; it is almost gay. But under the simplicity and gayety you cannot fail to come upon a consecration so spontaneous that it can dispense with solemnity. You drop into the Kleiner Musikvereinssaal and a middle-aged lady is singing both the secular and the sacred songs of Bach. The lady's voice is mediocre. The whole occasion has an intimate air. The singer's name has never been heard outside of Vienna and never will be. But she is not concerned with that. She has hit upon the right style and method—half naïve and childlike, half disembodied and strangely eternal —of singing Bach. And the bearers of all the great names in music and in literature are here. The thousand-dollar-a-night stars of the Metropolitan can rise and set. What this artist, what this audience wanted was to commune with Bach. To understand the master. To bring him to their midst. . . .

VI

The great figures of which the world knows—I must not omit them. But it is already clear why,

despite past disaster and present gloom, they thrive here. They are not always conscious of their felicity. Vienna lies in a shadow in these latter years and that shadow has descended even upon genius and glory. Arthur Schnitzler, small, compact, mobile, the lock still across his forehead despite his graying beard, is restless, profoundly dismayed by the coming on of age, by the apparent withering of that world of gardens and Mozartian tones and pain-touched gayety which he has embodied in his works. But he is wrongly dismayed by the temporal and temporary. The Vienna that he saw in his youth—that precise form and pressure —may be passing. He forgets that from what he saw he created a world that answers a permanent human mood and that world, inspired by a reality in Vienna, but not identical with it, can survive him and even the city. I doubt, in truth, whether the visible city and its people ever corresponded either more or less to his vision than it does now. The vision remains. The vision creates. Do we not all see Vienna through Schnitzler's eyes? Is not our Vienna his? And though the city were to crumble tomorrow—*that* would remain. . . . Schnitzler should be surer of himself. He stands before you. He talks. There is a sense of haste

and flight about him. A strange thing—a great man, in his old age, unsure of himself. It is a tribute to the kindness and delicacy of his heart. He need have no fears. His prose alone, a prose of sweet, hushed cadences, of precise and lovely diction, of poignant autumnal overtones, suffices. . . .

Hofmannsthal, a generation younger, is also luckier in his temperament. He has stylized himself as something between a poet and a man of the world. I do not mean that there is a shadow of affectation about him. He has seen himself so from the beginning. He must have been, even in the days of his enchanting early poetry, on the road toward a slightly hard perfection. He has been everywhere, speaks all languages, uses lands and people and books with a very rigid selectiveness, seeking to draw from each what will contribute to his mood and day and task. He does not give himself enough nor lose himself enough. The aristocratic ideal (or the æsthetic) is always barren in the end. And I think I see why the middle years of this charming gentleman and once great poet have brought forth no richer fruits. . . .

Franz Werfel, not so many years younger, comes from a different world—the world of revo-

lution, wild suffering, wild aspiration, passionate pity. A world that flung itself under the wheels of God. Werfel has grown a little stout and no longer writes much poetry. He writes novels and plays and his plays are becoming more and more playable upon the stage of our day. But the great love and the great humility and the great passion out of which he has created a body of lyrical poetry second to that of no living poet of his generation in any language—these qualities are still his. They give him a boyishness, a spontaneity, an immediate brotherly charm. He pours himself out. He is at once comrade and friend. He says profound things tentatively and simply and inquiringly. He leans back in an easy chair. He jumps up. A brilliant woman friend teases him. He is a little crestfallen, like a small boy. He is asked to read something from the manuscript of the new play ("Paulus Unter Den Juden") which he has just completed. No, he says, it isn't good enough. He can't read it; he may not publish it; he will have to see. He has the childlikeness and the humility of the strong poets. He has their carelessness of business and the affairs of the world. He cannot be found. An idea has sought him out; the hand of God is at the scruff

of his neck. He is in Venice or Semmering, hard at work. . . .

He is less of Vienna than the others—less of the city, above all, than Richard Beer-Hofmann. When I think of Vienna I shall always think first of that beautiful house that is so fit a dwelling for Paula and Richard Beer-Hofmann. The poet has not written a great deal—two lyrical dramas, a few poems, a hundred pages of prose. He has not traveled very widely. He read me magnificent fragments of his projected trilogy and I trust that, for the sake of his own satisfaction it will be given him to complete these dramas. But he need neither write more nor be more conversant with the world, nor strive nor cry in any fashion. His best work will remain his life and personality. He has achieved himself. I feel the luminous warmth of his spirit and I see him again in my mind's eye. Tall and broad and graceful still despite his weight and the gray in his tight, curved beard—what one sees first is the dark, lustrous eyes that are so incomparably wise and kind. Circumstances growing out of the war have introduced a discord into his life. But this discord has come strictly from without. Before that his was a wholly harmonious nature. If art is always to some extent a com-

pensatory act and gesture, the slimness of his output is explained. He needed no compensation. He was, almost from the beginning, balanced, serene, gifted with an instinct for wisdom, for human dignity, for a spiritual attitude so high and delicate that it met the humblest without stooping and confronted the highest without pride. He knew what was due to others and to himself and to art and to his lineage and to his city. A *grand seignieur* of the blood of the prophets. A poet and an illustrious gentleman of the tribe of Jesus. . . .

Such are the Viennese—the Viennese of, at least, one observer. No less unforgettable than these is the figure and the dark, glowing head of Wassermann who would appear every now and then from the mountains of Alt-Aussee. But Wassermann is not of this city. He, like Brahms and Hebbel, came here from other regions and like them stayed. . . .

VII

I have not, it will be observed, mentioned the famous Viennese *Gemütlichkeit*. To stress that quality which often has an edge of moral slovenli-

ness is after all to wrong the city and its people. The tourist comes to Vienna and finds the manners of the people very ingratiating—as indeed they are—and goes to a play or an opera and sits in a café and repeats the formula about *Gemütlichkeit* and wholly misses the city's just pride and high courage and consecration in the pursuit of art.

But the *Gemütlichkeit* exists. I can imagine nothing more delicious than a long vacation in Vienna. Breakfast with rolls from Bäcker Fritz. A very late breakfast, of course. For me a very light luncheon. Then a walk followed by a little nap in order to get ready for a long, long *Jause* at the Café Herrenhof or Graben or even Imperial with a group of friends. Dinner. A play, a concert, a performance of the "Entfuehring aus dem Serail" in the Redoutensaal, and then *Nachtmal* in a restaurant. Perhaps Frau Heller, manageress of the great concert-bureau will drop in and talk music and musicians, or Alfred Adler, who is a sage and looks like a business man, will tell you about his theories and explain why in the fairy-tales the youngest son always comes off so well. Or Bernhard Aschner will be there and protest against the butchery of the surgeons. It may be that the tousled head of Alexander Moissi, the

romantic actor, will appear and he will tell anecdotes about Russia and Mexico. Felix Salten, most brilliant of journalists and suave of men, may condescend to one. Or it may be a very great and rare evening with the Beer-Hofmanns on one of their infrequent visits to the crowded city. . . .

All that is *gemütlich* in the best sense. And better still perhaps is a long walk with a few chosen friends in spring when the chestnuts are in bloom into the hills and shadows of the Wiener Wald. . . . And all these aspects blend in memory, blend into a music of the spirit which the inner ear hears plainly and which seems to be the voice itself of that adorable and enchanting city which, for too brief a space, became a second home to me and mine. . . .

BERLIN

EVEN before the war it was the fashion to dislike Berlin. Today the phrases have become suspiciously stereotyped. No doubt the Prussians are not a superficially amiable people. But neither William II (no Prussian by ultimate descent, by the way) nor even Bismarck exhaustively represents their characteristics. There were and are, after all, Kant and Kleist and Fontane and Liliencron and Richard Dehmel and Hauptmann. . . .

The city does not give itself easily. It lacks wholly the grace of Vienna and the splendor of Paris. It has something spare and penurious and unyielding about it in one aspect, and, in another, something ultra-modern and brash. It is, in its present character, a modern city, and has, like New York, been careless of the preservation of its landmarks. But it has its own qualities of both aspect and atmosphere that are accessible to the sympathetic mind and that leave the ordinary phrases of the traveler in all their naked silliness. . . .

Some knowledge beyond newspaper headlines is needed, some memory of Lessing and Moses Men-

delssohn, of the romantic movement and Rahel's parties. At Luther and Wegner, over a marvelous roast pigeon and a glass of Brauneberger, you can survey the drawings and sketches that E. T. A. Hoffmann made as he sat here night after night. At Hiller's you must think of Liliencron. Everywhere you must think of the melancholy, lake-dotted plain of Brandenburg and about Fontane's shy, broken verses concerning the graves of his ancestors. People see Paris through the eyes of the novelists; they see Berlin with those of commercial travelers. That is but rude justice to the city. Who has read the fictions of Fontane or Georg Hermann's delightful novels of old Berlin?

Berlin, like the verses of Fontane, is shy. Yes . . . and impudent to cover the shyness and intensely afraid of the gesticulatory. A Protestant city that cannot quite reach either beauty on the one hand or severity on the other. It was made ridiculous in spots by the later Hohenzollerns, not by the earlier kings, and lacks the patina of old monuments to soften, by a sort of gradual approach, the experimentation of its modern buildings and statues.

Autumn is a good time in which to see the city, which wears a touch of melancholy with a natural

grace. The red and brown and yellow leaves of its innumerable trees seem a proper vestiture for its long, clean streets and avenues. During an autumnal dusk one may stand beside the river on the Schiffbauerdamm and look across to the softened bulk of the Reichstag building and submit to a moment of grave enchantment. . . . The Pariser Platz is spare and rigid, but in that spareness and rigidity is one aspect, not the meanest or the least appealing, of the eighteenth century. That aspect, to which time has lent more than a touch of pathos, one catches again at the other end of Unter den Linden when, facing the flamboyant Cathedral and walking to the left, one comes upon the old Museum—so humble and northern despite its classic outline—and the crooked streets about it. . . . The Schloss itself, as one comes back, is not without impressiveness, and the Platz has a largeness, which is more than a matter of so much space, that satisfies and cools the mind. . . .

Afternoon is better for the Tiergarten and the streets about it. The Siegesallee is absurd. But it is a hostile affectation to keep staring at it. The park is altogether lovely and thoroughly characteristic of the city. It is a very deep and a very quiet park, well-kept yet not over-smooth, with somber

and yet charming pools and ponds and lakes and little clearings full of flowers even at this late season. You must not ask gaiety and suavity of either the park or the city. Both belong to a people of a melancholy northern breed with the awkwardness and the scrupulous minds of the north. . . . The Corneliusbruecke is beautiful in its own way and so are the streets of the Tiergarten quarter. . . . People come here and say—symbolically speaking: But where are the arias of Florence and the chansons of Paris? They are not here. But there are ears to which the dryest songs of Brahms offer a spiritual sustenance that lasts. . . .

The newer residential quarters of the Kurfürstendamm and the Kaiserallee need no defense. They are the finest of any city on the world. If the architecture does not succeed in creating a distinct modern style that can rival the styles of other ages, it shares that weakness with the architecture of all countries. There is nothing here so blatantly offensive as the pink modern villas of Italy. The villas in the Grunewald section are, in fact, rivaled only by the very best in modern American domestic architecture. The apartments, especially in houses built between 1900 and 1910, are magnificent. They have, at quite moderate rentals

from an American point of view, a dignity and magnificence and a perfection of comfort that one finds nowhere else. And all the streets are full of trees and all the balconies full of well-tended flowers. And going farther and farther up the Kurfürstendamm on to the Grunewald there are streets that run into pine forests, the peculiar, aspiring, melancholy *Kiefern* of Brandenburg, and have a hush and a woody privacy and yet a tight comfort that are peculiar to this section of Berlin alone. . . .

The poets and the novelists do not live here. True. They seek cities and landscapes warmer and less angular. But the critics live here, perhaps the best now writing anywhere. Berlin is intellectually taut and aggressive and impatient. Yet now that the imperial drums have fallen silent and a republican simplicity prevails more and more, it is not unlikely that such a period may return as that quieter one during which Hauptmann and Strindberg and many others lived at Friedenau and found in the streets of Berlin and the plain of Brandenburg both inspiration and home. . . .

VENICE

VENICE is more beautiful than ever. Motor horns and tramways shriek and grind past the Forum and the monuments of the Medicis. Venice is tranquil. The gondolas still glide on the canals and even the broad wave whirled up by an occasional gasoline boat hardly troubles the city's old serenity. The doves are as undisturbed on the piazza as they were when Goethe and Byron saw them; one can sit at Florian's as quietly as in some legendary world and draw into oneself the shapes and colors of the palace and of the incomparable basilica.

Beauty is here in sky and water, in every bridge and corner. Paint and marble and gold have done their utmost. Words fail. Treasure is heaped on treasure and splendor on splendor and over it all broods a great, softening past. Beside this city Rome is loutish and Jerusalem sordid and Paris vulgar. Venice is like a perfect tragedy of the Renaissance. But time has laid its finger on the turbulence. A somber quietude is on her brow; the folds of her robe are unruffled by any wind.

Beauty is here. Is beauty enough? The Bridge of Sighs connects a palace and a prison. In the great halls of the palace the noblest colorists in the world have delineated the subjection of powers and principalities to their city! The doges are the symbols of the city's might. And the faces of the doges are hard as rock, cruel as machines, arrogant and implacable as death. They held "the gorgeous east in fee." They robbed; they tortured; they enslaved; they slew. For only so can men hold others "in fee." No wonder that the faces of the doges are dreadful and that their painted heads are unbowed even before the Christ and the Madonna of their faith.

Under the bridge and palace, deep below the glow of the majestic Titians and Tintorettos, are the small, foul, rocky dungeons to which, over that bridge so truly named *dei sospiri*, those arrogant doges sent any who opposed their might or incurred their displeasure. Here was the rack, the thumbscrew and the red-hot iron. When its end entered the living flesh with a hissing sound there was no echo of that sound above in those superb council chambers with their painted walls.

Far at the other end of the city, isolated there, is the old Ghetto and the new. Tall houses in

huddled streets. Six and even seven stories high. Rooms pushed out, rooms precariously built on. The people of the yellow gabardine swarmed up and down the crooked, crazy stairs of those tall prison-like houses. For they increased in numbers, as they had once done in Egypt, and were still herded and stifled in that narrow place. And for the privilege of dwelling there they paid the gold that helped to build the palaces and feed the painters of the great age. They came forth to chaffer for that gold and the proud Venetians voided their rheum upon the yellow robes of shame. "The eldest child of liberty?" In prison and ghetto, on foughten fields and in far piracies the Venetians yearly and daily and hourly crucified their God anew.

Is this rhetoric? No. The palace and the basilica, beautiful beyond words, the Titians and the Tintorettos with their unsoftened glow—these are the blare of a cruel and a pagan rhetoric. Time and forgetfulness have mellowed the city's hard and inhuman pomp. But the patina of the ages does not change the rocky and the stupid heart. The Fascist dictatorship of today is hungry to repeat the horrors of the doges; it sends free men into prison or exile; it prepares to murder and rob

in the east once more; it crucifies men in the mountains of the Tyrol.

Beauty is not enough. Too high a price can be paid for it. History and the history of art must both be reimagined and rewritten. Tourists come and gaze at the monuments and the blazing acres of paint in Venice. They are conducted over the Bridge of Sighs into the dungeons. They are neither stupid nor hard of heart. But their imaginations have become corrupted by a wrong emphasis. Would they have themselves or those they loved unjustly imprisoned and tortured to wild and despairing cries and think a palace and a painting excuse or expiation or reward? They prattle about art and forget life. Could Italy or the world once more be freed from the oppressor, could one lasting blow for liberty and peace and mercy be struck at such a price, I would stand unmoved while all this golden beauty, which stirs and haunts my soul no less than others', toppled forever into the overwhelming sea.

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